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WOMAN'S RIGHTS AND DUTIES.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

WOMAN'S

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

CONSIDERED WITH RELATION TO THEIR INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY AND ON HER OWN CONDITION.

BY A WOMAN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER VI.

LUXURY MORALLY CONSIDERED.

SECTION I.

Meaning of the word Luxury.

WORDS are liable to great ambiguity. Those that involve many ideas are understood somewhat differently, almost by every one, according to the degree of attention or knowledge he may bring to the subject; general terms are unavoidably used, sometimes in a larger, sometimes a more confined sense. The word "animal," for example, taken in its proper meaning for all animated beings, includes the human species; but it is oftener made use of to distinguish the brute creation from mankind. A French planter, whose son was prosecuted for the murder of a slave, in exclaiming, "What a fuss about an animal!" really meant, "What a fuss about a beast!" but in the following passage,—

> Day was departing,
> And the darkened air,
> To every animal that moves on earth,
> Brought respite from its toil*,

* *Dante Inferno.*

unless the reader take in the general sense of the term, including the noblest creature and the humblest, the intellectual and the brute, the chief force of the picture will be lost.

The ambiguity of many moral terms proceeds from their indicating a train of actions, or relations, all the circumstances of which are never twice exactly the same; we shall not find two instances of patriotism, of gratitude, or of candour, precisely alike in every particular. Those words, and a multitude of similar ones, convey not only a meaning but a sentiment: and the sentiment, whether it be approbation or censure, is found to cling immoveably to whatever actions the word has been applied to, however little they may really deserve it. Certain circumstances, carelessly overlooked or purposely kept out of sight, change the nature of actions alike in appearance; hence the misleading effect of vague or artful language.

The word "glory" always conveys admiration; and through its influence, not only have passions the most baneful to society been fostered, but even the very victims of misdirected ambition have been seduced to bestow their applause on the robber of their rights and liberties. It is not true that the admiration is bestowed, only on the great power and intellectual endowments, exhibited by some destroyer of mankind. This may be the case with the reflecting, but the mass of mankind make no such distinction. Approbation of his ends and purposes, as well as his valour and skill, is insinuated into the mind, by the terms of applause applied to the qualities

that make a conqueror. When we really disapprove the ends pursued, we scarcely admire the talents or courage they have drawn forth. What can demonstrate this more strongly, than the slight account we make of abilities expended on trifles, and the contempt we feel for the self-inflicted torments of faquirs and monks,—inflictions which sometimes assuredly required more fortitude, than any sufferings the most desperate wars are likely to entail? There is therefore always some corruption of feeling in favour of the end itself, when our bosoms do homage to glory, that is gathered at the expense of human happiness.

It is scarcely credible, to those who have not long and carefully examined the effects of words over our minds, how exceedingly confused and vague, the moral sentiments of mankind become from this cause. We attribute an incapacity of common reasoning, or an insensibility to right feeling, to persons who, in fact, have no clear ideas in their minds to reason about, or no perceptions definite enough to feel rightly; they are carried along by the compendious expression of odium or applause conveyed by an epithet. Whenever party spirit prevails, it is a common device on either side, to affix an epithet to the other, conveying some odious or contemptible purpose or quality. Hence the virtuous purposes of the party are brought into disgrace by their forced associate, and disclaimed as if they were vices. Sometimes a term, that implies nothing but what is laudable, is applied by the enemy, with a sneer, to every extravagance with which it has

the remotest affinity. To prove their detestation of the extravagance, opponents declare against everything to which the term is applied, however honest and just. The term is first degraded by the sneer, and in its turn degrades every action it is applied to. The sneer conveyed in the present day by the epithet "liberal," arises from its having been associated with the idea of free religious opinions, and democracy; and therefore we find people embracing bigotted and selfish doctrines, solely to prove that they are not atheists and anarchists. The reaction of this is to make religion and illiberality appear synonymous. The fear of the term "shabby" continually deters men from that frugality, which would keep them from defrauding their creditors, degrading their children, and fretting away their existence in despicable distresses, to support an appearance that imposes on no one but themselves.

Few words are more ambiguous than luxury, accordingly, few subjects have called forth greater disagreements of opinion. The word is sometimes applied to the productions of art and industry, sometimes to habits of life; but in neither case, whether applied to things or to manners, is it always easy to define what we mean by it, and what things are to be stigmatised as luxuries, or what others commended as useful improvements? Every convenience beyond acorns, a sheep skin, and a cave, would be considered luxuries in some situations; and many of the modes of life, which were marks of the excessive self-indulgence of the wealthy in one stage of society, become in another, when the arts of peace have diffused

general comfort, the unreproved enjoyments of all who can afford to procure them. Even among those who are living at the same time and under the same institutions, what is luxury in one station is not so in another. Nay, the very productions, which individually are taxed as luxuries, (a term which always conveys the idea of something which we should be morally better without,) under other aspects are extolled as the sources of our national prosperity. The plenty, variety, convenience, power, and security produced by our arts, are indeed the very objects and reward of that industry to which man was born.

The evils of luxury, however, have been felt at all times. By ancient writers they have been denounced in the strongest language they could find. "The accursed appetite for gold." "The wicked love of gain." "Riches the incitements to evil." They assume that the departure from ancient simplicity is an evil in itself; that luxury renders men effeminate and unwarlike, and leads at last to crimes that degrade human nature, and destroy the stability of nations. But though writers have so often agreed in its being the cause of national ruin, neither the feebleness nor the depravity, by which it produces such tremendous effects, seem to have any immediate connexion with the greater part of those refinements, which come within the term. Historians and moralists, however, who most advocate the productions of human skill, and style them emphatically the arts of peace, still seem to regard the prosperity they bring, rather as a transitory condition

than one which might be perpetuated; a happy medium between mere barbarism and over refinement, to which it is irresistibly tending, and which must end at last in moral corruption and national ruin.

From this vagueness in our views, it has followed that all those invectives, in which the unanimous testimony of the experienced has poured forth its warnings, have become incapable of application to the conduct of life. Nobody knows what to check. We find nations at one time passing sumptuary laws*, to regulate the number of guests a man might receive at his table; at another, to prevent the use of silk, except by princes and bishops†; and again, incurring great expense to sustain a manufacture of tapestry or of china‡. We find people sometimes encouraging profusion and waste, from a notion that it is good for trade, and at the same time convinced that the progress of luxury is bringing England, like other countries, to her downfall.

But as the disastrous tendency of luxury in one way, and its benefits in another, are both true, it will not be time misspent to inquire what causes the ruin, and what the prosperity. We know that we cannot recede if we would, so that if there be no principle at all, either for private or national wisdom to act upon, we must think that we are urged resistlessly forward in the road to ruin, with no hope but that the end may not come in our time. Some mournful reflections on human life in general, may

* *Orchia Lex* at Rome. † Henry II. of France.
‡ Gobelins; Sevres. SAY'S *Cours Complet.*

dispose some of us to say this is no very unusual description of life at any time; but in the present case, to act on the opinion that there is nothing to be done, is to ensure the calamity.

The nearest approach to a definite meaning of the word luxury, when employed in an ill sense, is that it implies some class of productions, or some forms of indulgence, which either waste the resources of the nation, or relax the moral vigour of the people. Luxury, in this obnoxious sense, is the consequence of great wealth without commensurate progress in knowledge and arts. People have then no idea how to spend their accumulations, except in sensuality or barbaric display. The first steps of unlettered barbarians, from labour and war to the possession of ease and plenty, usually tempt them to the coarsest excesses. If the virtues of rude simplicity last for a while, they fail not to disappear with a new generation, brought up without the habits that produced stern virtues, or the industry that produces civilization. The fierce temper and strong passions of the barbarian are stimulated by his excesses: sanguinary conflicts alternate with brutal indulgence, and his total want of self-control and of knowledge, leaves him exposed to the most violent reverses of fortune. To day he is a prince, to morrow a beggar.

It might be objected, that the term luxury always conveys an idea of some greater refinement than here supposed, and that in common language, no one would think of applying it to the coarse excesses of half-civilized nations. But I am about to show

that refinement cannot be made part of the idea of luxury, for it is really one of the correctives to its evils. The tendency of refinement and art is to give a better direction to self-indulgence, and to restrain its excesses. The profusion of our productions does more to direct the tastes of mankind virtuously and usefully, than to add new temptations to vice, or to waste the resources of the nation. If this be true, it will follow that the vices and mischiefs of our luxury are not the necessary consequences of our high civilization and great wealth, but of our remaining barbarism; and that the remedy would not be to recede, even if we could, but to go on. Refinement and wealth contain in themselves the means of the highest advances, both in virtue and prosperity. The tastes and the habits injurious to either, would be worse in themselves and in their effect on society, if our refinement and wealth were diminished. There may certainly be refinement in selfish sensuality as in other things. There may be some over-curious attention and delicacy about things either not worth the trouble, or positively censurable. And yet it will still be true, that the general effect of refinement is to repress the most hurtful and detestable vices. No meaning can be attached to refinement, except a great application of art and ingenuity, to render our productions and enjoyments as perfect as possible; and in this view its tendency, upon the whole, is decidedly beneficial and moral. If the idea of luxury do not necessarily imply refinement, neither does it necessarily imply vice. A thing may justly

be called a luxury, when compared with the health and comfort we may enjoy without it, though it has no ill effect whatever, and is never condemned by anybody. And yet things even of this innocent nature, when multiplied, constitute at last that idea of excess which we think inseparable from corruption. This is perhaps the most frequent light in which luxury is viewed: not as positive vice in itself, but as leading inevitably to vice.

It would be very desirable even in theory, to establish some test or standard by which to judge our luxuries,—what to condemn as corrupting, and what to encourage as a step in refinement. This will be attempted in the present chapter, in which I shall endeavour to trace out, the nature of the injury done to the character by luxury. If we learn to connect that injury with its true causes, we shall not waste our efforts by attempting to repress what is innocent, or perhaps even beneficial, while we leave the real source of the evil unrestrained. The subject involves rather an extended examination of habits and manners, peculiarly under the influence of women; and the defects of which could be very imperfectly controlled, without their willing co-operation.

Section II.

Advantages of Luxury exemplified.

One great purpose of this material world, with all its furniture, appears to be to awaken the perceptions and draw forth the intelligence of its inhabitants. Thought and sensation are what constitute our existence; these require the agency of something external to excite them. If we are to see, there must be light; to hear, there must be vibration of the air; if we are to think, it must be about external things, or ideas, which, though they spring from the mind itself, never would have been stirred up, if we had not first had other perceptions. The impact from without, is as requisite as the fire within, otherwise the spark remains latent for ever. Powers and feelings, never excited by corresponding external objects, never unfold themselves at all. The human beings who in a few instances have been found in wild and absolute solitude, where they had been abandoned so young, as to have retained none of those ideas we derive from society, appear at first sight deficient in common intelligence. Nothing corrects this impression, but the perfect acuteness of their senses and faculties in every particular concerning which they had been exercised in their solitude. Deaf, blind, and stupid to everything but what relates to procuring food, or defending themselves from the attacks of animals, their condition proves how absolutely dependent our nature is upon circumstances, for its development.

We exist only to the extent that we think and feel. It is true that we say of a stone or a vegetable that it exists, but its existence is relative only to others, that is, to beings who perceive and make use of it; to itself it has none. The same is not true of the human creature: his existence consists altogether of his perceptions and thoughts, and he exists no further. We come into this world we may say, only half created, we are formed and finished here, by the unfolding of our latent capacities. Every additional idea, therefore, is an increase of our very being. Perception of some sort I suppose, begins the moment we are born, and how much we are capable of, no one can tell. Perhaps no human being ever had all the existence he is capable of, called forth; we know not the limits of our progressiveness, but we see in it, a marked difference between ourselves and other animals. Man is not the only creature that reasons, but there never was a race of men so degraded, as not to be capable of improvement and increase of ideas to so great an extent, as to form the most decided and evident contrast between their nature and that of brutes. In his wild state the brute comes to perfection*. The tricks that we teach him, amuse us, or serve our purposes, but they do not serve the purposes of the creature; they add nothing to his well-being; he cannot

* What we call the wild state of the animal, is in fact (with respect to itself,) its most perfect social condition. The wildness as we call it, is relative only to us; so that the term applies to the animal, in a different sense from what it does to the man.

apply the actions we teach him, or the principle of them, to supply food or security for himself, and transmit his acquirement to his posterity. But in a wild state the best parts of man's nature are lost or obscured; his progressiveness remains without effect.

It is in obedience to this law of our nature, that human invention and industry are ever pouring forth copious streams of new productions; and this supplies the true answer to that senseless and paralyzing "*cui bono*," so often applied to the acquisition of knowledge which does not minister directly, either to filling our purse, or feeding our vanity. One direct use of knowledge is, that it fulfils the very end of this life, by unfolding our capacities and raising us a stage further from the condition of the inferior animals. This is an individual benefit to ourselves, whether we add by the invention or production of new ideas, to the mass of intelligence already existing or not. But the necessary consequences of knowledge among numbers are the productions of art, the pleasures and uses of which again excite new desires, which call forth new mental activity. There might be a contented torpor—but this is not the nature of man: one step further back would be annihilation, from which our nature recoils. It is clear, therefore, that we are impelled by an instinctive impulse to seek the happiness peculiar to *human* nature, which is, to be full of thought and activity. If it be an unnatural or criminal act to destroy our existence, it must be natural and meritorious to draw it forth and enlarge it as much as we

can. No other end is needed to justify the acquisition of any branch of knowledge, but that it serves to furnish the mind with a new stock of ideas, to call forth latent faculties, and waken emotions and perceptions unknown before. Nor is any other justification required for new arts and productions, however unnecessary for mere sustenance or mere safety, than that they bring the same excitement to society. Art, whether in the exercise of it, or the convenience or pleasure its productions afford others, fills society with mental activity.

It is true that, unlike the instinct of animals, invention may be directed to things that are not for our advantage; but this only brings us back to the old fact, that we are liable to make mistakes. Reason must control and direct every power that we have. When it goes astray, as sometimes it will, it gathers experience from its own failures; and to reason, enlightened by further reflection, we appeal, to rectify its own errors. But though required more or less, to regulate everthing, nothing can be more opposed to its dictates than to stifle any propensity that nature has given us.

Enjoyment is a good in itself. It is the object of every exertion, bodily or mental. The only objection to anything in particular, is that it has cost too much; that something more valuable has been sacrificed to obtain it. But that value is not to be estimated in money or selfish satisfaction alone. The too great cost we condemn, may be in the happiness of other creatures, or in the time, the health, the reputation, or the conscience we have forfeited. Man is a social

being, and has no right to take a great enjoyment from others for a slight one to himself, nor indeed is it ever his real interest to do so. Many things must be taken into account, before we can decide that our efforts are as well directed as they might be. But by no other test than its effects upon individual and social welfare can the character of luxury be tried. For it is no imputation upon a thing, to say that it is artificial and remote from somewhat that we call the simplicity of nature. The simplicity of nature leads too commonly to squalid filth and laziness, to smoky huts, to alternate excess and famine, to vehement passions, furious wars, gross superstitions, and stupid indifference. It is not because "our aspiring structures seek the skies," or that "our vessels pass the gulfs, by which the baffled gods had parted nations," that "angry Jove will not lay down his bolt." Further still from truth is the ascetic principle that makes privation meritorious for its own sake, assuming that there is most merit in renouncing whatever in its own nature is most delightful. On such grounds, if error could ever be consistent with itself, good men might question the indulgence of piety and benevolence. The evil of these errors is much less in the sacrifice of innocent enjoyment, than in the waste of moral energy they entail. The most valuable quality we possess, self-control, a quality we never can have as abundantly as the good of society requires, is thus expended on miserable trifling.

It is not the splendour, beauty, and convenience of consummate art that injures society; neither is any

degree of national wealth injurious, except that which is wrung from poverty and held by a few. Great disparity of condition is an evil. But there is no necessary connexion between great national wealth and a vicious distribution of it. In poor countries, the disparity of condition is often greater than in rich ones. It is in some measure in the power of governments, by wise institutions to check the accumulation of over-grown fortunes; but if extreme destitution were prevented, inequalities of condition might still be very considerable without detriment to the community.

In an industrious commercial country, individual wealth, far from implying a corresponding deficiency among many others, is often the testimony of benefits conferred upon society. And unlike the spoils of conquered provinces laid up in the capitol, the sight of it directs the cupidity of the present day, into channels more serviceable to humanity, than the disinterested patriotism of former times.

If the costly and artificial be a test of luxury, the steam engine that propels our vessels against wind and tide, the conversion of coal into blazing air to light our streets, the construction of rail-roads, by which the very gravitation of matter to the earth seems suspended, are more far fetched and remote from the simplicity of nature, more splendid and imposing to the imagination, than all the gorgeous theatres of old, where tens of thousands of savage bosoms, stood exulting in the exhibition of anguish beneath; or the temples and palaces, measured by acres not feet, and whose colossal and out-stretched

fragments, seem to our astonished senses, to people the dead and silent desert, with beings of unearthly dimensions. But the effect of the former is to diffuse convenience through the whole community. Instead of despoiling any one, they enrich every body; and instead of ministering to fierce passions or selfish pre-eminence, the only possibility of their existing at all, is their utility to numbers; the effect of such luxury therefore is wholly beneficial.

It has been remarked as a curious proof of English luxury, that a maid-servant cannot sit down to her breakfast, till it has been brought to her from the eastern and western extremities of the earth. But though beer drunk out of a skull, made a satisfactory paradise to the imaginations of our early ancestors, our morals and manners will not suffer by the substitution of tea out of a china cup.

The variety of aliments brought in from every part of the world, do something better than stimulate appetites palled by excess. They are desirable merely as contributing to abundance. But their qualities being different from our home productions, render them a useful corrective to the ill effects of living too exclusively on the same diet. Any species of food continued the whole year round, without any change, is found to produce some ill effect on the health. In the remoter parts of the empire, this is an inconvenience frequently felt. But it is of necessity felt a good deal everywhere by the working classes, even by many who are not in the lowest scale of poverty. Their diet is not only too uniform, but consists much of things not very wholesome,

and which cannot be long continued with impunity. Such are salted meat and fish, cheese and pulse. The benefit would therefore be great, if foreign fruits, rice, maize, arrow-root, sugar, spices, (which add flavour to the most insipid fare,) and other commodities of the same description, were admitted at the lowest cost. Their varied and salutary properties would add largely to health and enjoyment, at those frugal boards, where no variety can be indulged in that adds to expense*.

The very word light, compendiously expresses beauty, cheerfulness, safety, and occupation. What a blessing are the far-sought oils, and the ingenious contrivances that spread it abundantly through our habitations, and render the long wintry nights in our towns, one continuous illumination. The wax lights that brighten the apartments and preserve the sight of those who can afford that luxury, take nothing from the poorer members of society, but rather cheapen the coarser commodities they consume, by withdrawing a great demand from their market.

* It is frequently said of the Irish, who in some parts live entirely on potatoes, that they are a remarkably athletic and healthy people.

Potatoes are perhaps as wholesome a vegetable as any in the world, when they are good in their kind; but it is a mistake to suppose it is healthful to live on them entirely. The Irish have a great deal of disease among them. Different forms of stomach complaint are very prevalent; and what is remarkable, it is by no means unusual to meet with persons whose constitutions never can bear potatoes, though they and their parents had been used to them from youth. They linger on in continual ill health, which is immediately removed on changing their diet. This I observed during many years personal experience.

The beauty and variety of the fabrics that constitute our clothing, have spread neatness, cleanliness, and comfort through every rank. The passion for dress is indeed attended with some evil consequences, and it cannot be denied, that the facility with which it can be indulged through the cheapness of our gaudy and tempting productions, has increased those evils in the lower classes, where their mischief is greatest. But in the middle and upper classes, personal vanity was not an atom less, when silk was worth its weight in gold, fine linen not very much cheaper; when cloth, of certain fine dyes, sold for 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* the pound weight, and some sorts for ten times that sum, 33*l.* 6*s.* 8*d**. History and satires give us no reason to think the extravagant cost of manufactures in ancient times, operated to check the passion for dress, in those who could afford its indulgence by any sacrifice of other things: and from the state of manners, one is tempted to believe that Pope's lines

> Narcissa's nature, tolerably mild,
> To make a wash would hardly stew a child,

in those days would not have been a very satirical compliment. At Athens, the extravagance of women's dress was restrained by sumptuary laws, and an Athenian coxcomb was a very elaborate production.

In considering the solid and extensive benefits derived from the progress of luxury, as we term it, we should not overlook the advantages it conveys to less civilized nations. Our cottons, which are light

* Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations.*

and delicate, or strong and warm, as occasion may require, are scattering comfort and convenience over half the globe. Our hardware may be regarded as carrying civilization wherever it penetrates; for without iron tools what can man accomplish? what can he not effect with proper instruments and machinery?

If we examine a well-furnished English house, how many luxuries it presents, to which not a rational objection can be made, either with respect to their immediate influence, or their indirect consequences to others. What evil can arise from plate-glass windows with verandahs? what from mirrors that offer their softened reflection of the trees and herds without, or repeat the apartment itself with a fanciful addition of comfort and size? What from carpets to preserve warmth and prevent noise, or from a handsome well-constructed fireplace, instead of a rude hearth that wastes the heat? There is nothing but real advantage, or innocent pleasure in the durable and graceful pieces of furniture for every purpose of utility, formed with consummate skill, out of the most beautiful materials that native and distant woods and mines produce. The easels, the work-tables, the paintings, which, wherever the eyes turn, present the mind with the fairest and noblest expressions of nature; the books, the musical instruments, all invite occupation, and seem, alas! too fallaciously, as if ennui or discontent could never harbour within those walls.

Over-indulgence is a very unnecessary concomitant of the enjoyment and convenience procured for

us by the refinement of our arts. The disposition to self-indulgence begins the moment the iron necessity for labour ceases. But I cannot help thinking the tendency of such refinements as the foregoing, is to generate tastes more favourable to society and to our own better feelings, than the baronial hall with its attendant train of idle dissolute retainers; its straight-backed chairs and vacant tables, where no employment existed to fill the interval between meals, but brightening up armour and playing at dice or chess; their earthen floors strewed with reeds, beneath which lay the remnants of victuals, mixed with long-gathered dirt.

Frequent changes of fashion are in many cases a source of great waste, and are injurious to the interests of manufacturers, as shall be shown in its place; but with respect to the solid and useful commodities we are now considering, they have rather a contrary effect. Tables, chairs, bureaus, bedsteads, discarded by the whimsical and extravagant, because newer forms have been invented, go down at a cheap price to those who could not have afforded anything nearly so well constructed and serviceable, and where their forms serve as patterns for articles made of cheaper materials.

Among our luxuries let us not omit the crowning pride of English taste—our gardens. In this ornament of life there is something that conciliates every bosom, and renders it needless to say a word in its defence; strictly speaking, there is not more use in having our lawns carpeted with flowers, than our rooms with woollen webs, or in hanging wreaths of

the rich and fragrant wisteria or clematis on our walls, than festoons of silk on our windows; they however who dispute all other pleasures agree in hallowing this. The serious philosopher who refuses his own time to anything but the advancement of science, has still a sympathy for this pleasure in others, and delights to promote it. The arid children of the world pay their last tribute to the shrine of nature, in their love of flowers, and bring them in costly profusion from their luxuriant soils, to expire in unkindly London apartments. The money-making citizen, who has few ideas but those of gain, thinks his gatherings well laid out in the purchase of gardens; and even the narrow bigot who "fixes his grieved look" on all that human invention has done for social improvement, withdraws his scowl from the pursuits of gardening; and while he scruples not in his sullen views of God "to cut asunder the golden thread that ties the hearts of friends together," spares this source of innocent delight.

English cottage gardens, the admiration of foreigners, attest the humble means which suffice to indulge this taste. One would imagine that the love of a garden presented itself to English bosoms, in the light of natural affection; for where this is concerned, they lay aside their exclusiveness and take pleasure in associating their inferiors with them in pursuit. How excellent is the taste that allays for a moment the unsocial severity of English pride; that conduces to health and activity, and spreads enjoyment and occupation over every day in the year.

Flowers and shrubs will not fill the place of earnest pursuits, or of "hopes too fondly nursed, too rudely crossed," but they will steal away the slow hours of brooding regret, and brace the nerves of those who have to return from the grave of the fervent and faithful, to shudder at the coldness of the living. But it is not mere fragrance and beauty, that the passion for gardening has scattered through the country. It has increased its produce by a great variety of esculent productions, and it cannot be doubted that these riches are still far from their limits.

Among our most curious productions are innumerable contrivances that save time, labour, anxiety, expense, and danger. Operations that would require extraordinary care and accuracy to execute well, are performed with unerring precision by a tool or machine. Thus, it is said, the life of a man would be scarcely sufficient, to divide by the hand an astronomical circle into the minute divisions required, and in which the slightest deviations from perfect accuracy would cause error. Even a common rule would be an expensive article, if its divisions into degrees and sections depended on precision of eye and hand in the maker. The most remarkable contrivances of this nature may be found in manufacturing machinery, and the reader may be referred to Mr. Babbage's *Economy of Machinery in Manufactures*, where the whole of a most agreeable volume is employed to illustrate the advantages we derive from our arts. In this place it may be objected that, if

once the utility of the manufactures themselves be admitted, contrivances which merely enable the artisan to do well and easily, that which it is agreed must be done some way, would by no one be classed under the head of luxuries. I shall therefore only observe that the same scientific principles that have saved expense to society, and labour and risk to the manufacturer, are daily at work, constructing instruments and conveniencies for the idle and wealthy, to perform every operation their amusements or pursuits require. And many of the most beautiful specimens of human ingenuity are employed to produce things of very trifling utility when done. Such is the tambouring machine. Frills with a pattern on them are of no such use as to make it desirable to introduce the taste purposely, but as it is very innocent, if they happen to be called for by the public, the advantage is obvious, of every contrivance that shortens the labour and secures the result. The mere purpose of amusement has sometimes excited the human mind to the most surprising efforts of invention; insomuch, that one cannot, in reading the accounts of them, avoid regretting the labour that was spent on speaking automatons, making them play the flute, and constructing a duck that could eat, drink, and walk about*. The reflections, however, with which Dr. Brewster concludes his description of these pieces of mechanism, rather raise

* See BREWSTER'S *Natural Magic.*—Vaucanson's duck and flute player; Kempelen's talking engine; Maillard's spider, serpent, &c.

their importance, their results being much above what their projectors intended. "The passion," he observes, "for automatic exhibitions which characterized the eighteenth century, gave rise to the most ingenious mechanical devices, and introduced among the higher order of artists, habits of nice and accurate execution in the formation of the most delicate pieces of machinery. The same combination of the mechanical powers which made the spider crawl, or which waved the tiny rod of the magician, contributed in future years to purposes of higher utility. Those wheels and pinions, which almost eluded our senses by their minuteness, re-appeared in the stupendous mechanism of our spinning machines, and our steam engines. The elements of the tumbling puppet were revived in the chronometer, which now conducts our navy through the ocean, and the shapeless wheel which directed the hand of the drawing automaton, has served in the present age to guide the movements of the tambouring engine. Those mechanical wonders which, in one age, enriched only the conjuror who used them, contributed in another to augment the wealth of the nation; and those automatic toys, which once amused the vulgar, are now employed in extending the power and promoting the civilization of our species. In whatever way, indeed, the power of genius may invent or combine, and to whatever low, or even ludicrous purposes that invention or combination may be originally applied, *society receives a gift which it can never lose;* and though the value of the seed may

not be at once recognised, and though it may long be unproductive in the ungenial till of human knowledge, it will some time or other evolve its germ, and yield to mankind its natural and abundant harvest*."

In many respects the luxury of the present day exhibits itself in less childish ways than formerly. Mere toys are less numerous, and more pains are expended in bringing useful things to refined perfection. Clocks and watches of the most perfect description, plate-glass windows, forcing-pumps, stoves, bells, carpets, and numberless similar commodities, add much to the enjoyment of those who can purchase them, though neither their bread nor their business depend upon exact observance of hours and minutes, or on the command of strong and clear light, and though they might perhaps easily afford the fires which the stoves economise, or pay for hands to carry water. The things, it is true, are luxuries which our forefathers did very well without, but we do much better with them; and through the industry they feed, we maintain a greater population in comfort than they could have done. It is not only things applicable to the ordinary pursuits of life, which become luxuries by the finished delicacy to which they are brought, for the demand of the wealthy. The same is true of many of the instruments of science and art. Not only statues, pictures, engravings, models of remarkable places and things, but telescopes, microscopes, and various other philosophical instruments, air-pumps,

* Brewster's *Natural Magic.*

electrical machines, galvanic batteries, maps, turning lathes, are mere luxuries in the hands of the many who have them rather as furniture, than for any use they can make of them. Yet even in this trifling view there is no doubt that, far from doing mischief, they contribute to stimulate mental activity, and to give that refined cast of feeling, which a taste for the study of nature excites, even when imperfectly and indolently pursued. It cannot indeed be denied, that a profusion of new things, continually flowing in upon a person who never allows himself for a moment to feel an ungratified wish, has rather the effect of palling his taste for everything, than exciting him to pursuit. But in many more instances, access to things of this description redeems people from idleness, discontent, or vicious propensities. We cannot impart to the languid owner of a splendid library, with its marble tables and antique vases, the same degree of delight which the earnest and active-minded take in scientific pursuits. The sensations, with which the latter take possession of the long-wanted books or instruments they were too poor to purchase, are very superior to his who receives his new acquisition as a matter of course, admires its construction, feels some gratified vanity in explaining its uses to those who pay for their dinner, by affecting an interest in his pursuits, and then lays it by, to be looked at once in five years. But though he may not do much, how superior are the temper and tastes his conversation and example promote, to those of the patrons of races and other forms of mere frivolity!

Even among personal luxuries there are some which have an influence purely beneficial. In every industrious and well-peopled community, there must be a considerable number of its inhabitants exempt from bodily labour; comparative delicacy of frame is a necessary consequence. To preserve equal health, therefore, their habitations must be better constructed. There are degrees of cold, damp, deficient light, space, and ventilation, which are not noticed by those whose occupations keep their blood in vigorous circulation, and take them a good deal out of doors, but which in the sedentary would quickly generate disease. The well-constructed apartments, therefore, which are regarded as the luxuries of the wealthy, are really necessary to them. If they renounced such accommodation, and lived in small, damp houses, those of the working classes would not thereby become better; instead of lessening general comfort, they increase the riches of the country. Well-built houses and commodious furniture have more positive utility than inferior ones; they have more exchangeable value to every one through whose hands they pass, and they are among the most durable of the creations of labour. Next to securing plenty of food, it is most desirable to extend the essential comforts of warmth, ventilation, and dryness to the habitations of the poor, and chiefly of sedentary artisans. The poor labour under peculiar disadvantages with respect to their lodging: their houses are not their own. They must go where they can get work; and it seldom would be prudent in them to lay out any of their

savings in improving the houses that they rent. Consequently the improvements that conduce to health, comfort, and economy in the dwellings of the upper classes, seldom extend to theirs. Not only are happiness, health, and frugality promoted by a good house, but even morals. Here, without too long a digression, no more can be done than to express a wish attention were turned to the best means of improving the habitations of the manufacturing and town poor. The improvements in the houses of the rich have the advantage of serving as examples and experiments; new materials, new contrivances, new constructions, are first tried and gradually brought to perfection, by those who can afford to make alterations in what does not answer. What a rich person has tried with a very uncertain prospect of success, if it succeed, becomes simplified, cheapened, and spread further through society. But improvements do not often go down to the poor; there is a culpable inattention to the site and construction of their dwellings, and money would be very well laid out in diffusing among them, an acquaintance with those improvements in warming and ventilating houses which would come within their reach.

Everything that ministers to that perfect cleanliness and delicacy so remarkable in the English, unlike all other forms of luxury, scarcely admits of excess. In this respect the habits of the upper classes directly sustain those of their inferiors, whose condition is less favourable to their culture. The arrangements for insuring cleanliness, neatness, and

regularity in an English house deserve admiration, and have the effect of rendering the contrary intolerable. Much of the refinement on comfort in a gentleman's house consists in provisions for absolute quiet and privacy. These are both very essential to real refinement of mind and manners; without them there can be no serious mental pursuit, and little intermission of dissipation. This is not the place to discuss the importance of the first of those objects; but the present opportunity of recalling attention to it cannot be entirely neglected. However unnecessary for emolument, mental or manual industry may be, nothing can divest those who derive support and protection from society, of the duty of contributing in some way to its good. On the progress of religious, moral, and scientific truth, depends almost every improvement in the condition of man. Acquirements of that description must be very limited in those who have to work all day for their bread, but they are incumbent on all who have leisure and means. Our duties are so various, that everybody who is idle is not equally reprehensible. There can be no law, even of opinion, to regulate a duty that must vary with the abilities, the health, the avocations, and many other circumstances of each individual. Mental indolence may sometimes be pardonable, but it cannot be denied, that they who are neither performing some active duty to society, to their own families, to the poor, nor yet contributing by the soundness of their views to the dissemination of useful truth, are really a mere burden on the resources of the country. It may be

replied, that very few persons are so absolutely idle as to be of no use to their own families and dependents at the least. But if from want of instruction their social duties are extremely ill performed, and the good that they do is counteracted by the errors they help to perpetuate, it comes much to the same thing. A wealthy country may afford to have a few idlers, but if their numbers be large and their consumption great, what will follow but that, with the best religion in the world, the best constitution in the world, and the greatest wealth in the world, we may yet see such masses of misery and crime from mismanagement, that we shall be staggered as to the influence of wealth, liberty, and even religion itself? Hence it is that where arts and knowledge are very low, wealth generates the worst forms of luxury. It is there we find slaves and despots, feudal tyrants and idle retainers, pride in all its insolence, severing man from man, and war in its greatest ferocity.

Human beings just reclaimed from the torpid indolence, or the wild and animating sports of the savage state, sink into great misery, if industry and invention do not come to their assistance. These are the natural resources for the ferment of the spirits, when they can no longer burst forth into lawless adventure. They are the right channels into which the activity of our nature is intended to turn; and if we trace them in their progress, divested of the accidental distresses with which they have been accompanied, we shall perceive they are productive of enjoyment in every stage.

From the first moment the half-defined idea springs up in the mind of the inventor, till that in which it comes forth in its finished form, he lives in a region of excitement and hope. From his hands his invention passes to those of the workman to copy and multiply. By him it is welcomed as the source of employment and profit. Lastly, it becomes the property of the purchaser, whose pleasure in the possession will not be disputed; and yet his enjoyment might be found the least of the three. It has been remarked by Say, that the spectators at a theatrical representation may sometimes be detected yawning, but never the composer or actors.

The world is therefore much happier for the multiplicity of conveniences, and the variety of possessions and pleasures addressed to the taste and imagination, which high refinement brings in, and which constitute so great a part of what we call luxury. This is so certain, that even if we were all to agree to live in Mr. Owen's parallelograms, it would still be necessary to take our arts with us, if we meant to supply our dense population with material comforts, and those enployments for the mind, without which, the monotony of existence will ever make mankind prefer the excitements of predatory life. Taken in this sense, luxury is the natural result of the progress of society in numbers and prosperity. To speculate on the preference due to countries which "Though very poor, may still be very blest," is but an amusement of the imagination. A very delightful one, perhaps; for, while man has a heart to feel and an imagination to be touched, it ever will be delight-

ful to turn from the turmoil and the party strife of a dense metropolis, to the contrast of some secluded simple village, which a concurrence of happy accidents, has made a sort of Arcadia. But it is a physical impossibility such a condition could be general. To dwell on the picture may soothe our spirits, like the twilight of summer, but to improve the world that we live in, we must draw from the resources of knowledge and art.

The sum of the argument is, that the perfection of art, science, industry and refinement, so far from leading to the corruptions of luxury, are really their correctives. Art and industry are sometimes, no doubt, misapplied. Our vices and follies will of course have an influence in misdirecting our industry and our talents. But since the corruption is not produced by the refinements and arts of high civilization, it remains to examine in what manner the influx of wealth really operates to pervert the human character. We may then better judge of the moral tendency of what we call our luxuries.

Section III.

Corruptions of Luxury.

The corruptions of wealth are well enumerated in the following passage:—

"The immediate effect of the possession of wealth is to stimulate an unbounded indulgence in sensuality. It naturally produces an eager desire for pleasure, and among a rude people the pleasures of sense alone have any powerful attraction. It tends also to en-

gross the mind with frivolous pursuits, and to withdraw the attention from those that are really interesting and important. The consideration which fortune secures, frees its possessor in a great measure from the restraints of public opinion, which are so necessary for the bulk of mankind. It naturally induces pride, which on the least contradiction is exasperated into fierceness. Wealth tends to obliterate the distinctions of merit and worth, to make men be esteemed by themselves and others less according to their intrinsic desert, than by the adventitious circumstances by which they are surrounded. Nor is its influence less fatal on those who, though destitute of fortune themselves, are in its immediate vicinity. They are tempted by the view of those indulgences of which they see others in possession. Dazzled by the splendour which surrounds wealth, by the accommodations which it procures, and by the homage which is paid to it, they are seized by the wicked love of gain. They learn to consider every other object as secondary, and to scruple at no means of amassing it, however mean and criminal*."

It is easy to connect the decay of nations with such characters as those, should they become widely prevalent. Pride with its attendant selfishness on one side, rapacity and servility on the other, is adverse both to the formation and maintenance of free institutions. Disregard to the distinctions of merit and worth stifles their spirit from the first, and prevents the existence of a healthy standard of pub-

* *Enquiries, Historical and Moral, respecting the Characters of Nations, &c.* By Hugh Murray.

lic opinion. Worst of all, the effect of sensuality and habitual self-indulgence, is to wear out the very springs of self-command; so that neither the experience of past sufferings, nor the evidence of coming ruin, can unite society in any effective exertion for public good. The impotent cannot "Take up their bed and walk," therefore nothing is left but to rage or stagnate, according to the casual impulses of individual temperament, or external circumstances. But imbecile rage will only create ferments or massacres, till the passion has spent itself, and the desire for quiet brought back submission to accustomed oppression. Where the mind has no controlling power over the passions, the impulse of the hour may drive men into the alternate excesses of violence or weakness, but never can produce the determined character of energy, the defined purpose, the firm resolve, the steady perseverance of a people whose moral training has taught them to control their impulses, and enabled them to act from their cool convictions.

Wherever there is great wealth, some degree of the vices it has a tendency to generate, must be expected. But the influence of art, science, and industry, in counteracting the sensuality and frivolity described in the above quotation, is evident. The progress of refinement imposes restraint on the fierceness of pride. Art opens a variety of avenues to social distinction, a passion for which is acknowledged by almost every bosom, and which in a rude state of society is scarcely attainable except by war. There can be but two modes of acquiring wealth, namely, creating useful things and performing useful

services, or plundering those who are already rich. The advantage therefore is incalculable, of having the way to that wealth, which is an object of such eager desire, opened through the channels of useful productions, instead of rapine. This justifies the opinion, that the vices of luxury are not inherent in a condition of high refinement in arts and civilization, but are the remains of that barbarism which it is very hard to subdue.

The vices of luxury may take the form either of fierceness or effeminacy, but the two are not incompatible, and which shall prevail, appears to depend on other causes than the regular progression of wealth. History scarcely justifies the opinion, that the progress of society is from ferocity to refinement, and from refinement to moral debility. We know that in some countries refinement has never come; and unless we deny that there has ever been any such thing as refinement in Europe, we must admit that the most refined countries are also the boldest and most enterprising: they appear also more stable, both as to general and individual prosperity, than the rude. National character is the result of many accidents; and, like a moving ball, may take a direction from an obstruction or impulse that has escaped observation. The first class of vices which are brought in by riches, are naturally attended by fierceness rather than feebleness; for the earliest accumulations of wealth proceed usually from war and rapine, or some cause easily reducible to the same principles. Such are the possession of extensive lands, worked by miserable beings, who never

rise above the condition of brutes; fiscal exactions under inartificial forms of government, moved by no springs but those of fear or force; or monopolies of such trades as exist, where a single authority, in total ignorance of the laws of production, restricts the rights of industry from all but a few hands. In these and similar conditions, the wealth of one, implies the privation of many. One part of the community is the natural enemy of the other. The spirit of war must be kept up; acts of violence and aggression must be frequent, for they are essential to the acquisition or maintenance of that wealth, which has no other sources. Idleness, which, before the diffusion of arts and knowledge, is the usual accompaniment of wealth, excites irritability, even in persons whose temper and passions are not violent by nature; and the pride and self-importance of riches, urge these almost inevitably into the course of oppression.

Nevertheless, the spirit of violence does not exclude the vices of sloth and effeminacy, as is too commonly supposed. Unfortunately, it is well proved, that a nation may be divided into ruffians and sensualists. Even the same individual may alternately be both. The sensuality and self-indulgence which fill up the leisure left by war and civil dissensions, are always enervating the character, and leaving it exposed to the dominion of any vices, whether the violent or the slothful, that offer their seductions. The spirit of luxury has therefore but a very uncertain tendency to subside of itself from violence to indolence. For if, on the one side, in-

creasing means of sensual indulgences, tend to withdraw many minds from the fury of war,—on the other, wealth sustained by rapine, or somewhat akin to it, has little connexion with the spirit of peace. Accordingly we find in the East, Indian and Persian empires lasting century after century, so enervated as to be nearly incapable of renovation, and yet continuously engaged in desolating wars and dissensions, accompanied by the most horrible cruelties; in which we find a defeated competitor deprived of his eyes, or flayed alive, without any unusual excitement of surprise or indignation.

It may be, indeed, that in so depraved a condition, war being the only thing that creates any self-command, any union, any exertion of mind, a long peace may leave undisputed predominance to the vices of sloth and effeminacy. War may have a counteracting effect to mere torpor for a while; but it will not prevent the return of the disease. Unless moral causes, such as good government and habits of industry, succeed to the temporary discipline of war, that stimulant will leave the debased people to relapse into their old apathy. War therefore is neither the proper corrective to the vices of luxury, nor have peace and its arts a tendency to render a people too soft and effeminate. Let those who think otherwise, reflect seriously on the history of Asiatic nations, or look on Spain at this moment. If high refinement led to comparative moral debility, how could we see the profuse and widely-spread luxury of the English, connected with such boldness and energy, and the impoverished

nobles in some continental countries, such slaves as they are to pleasure and indolence? It is the government and religion of the Italians and other nations, which repress their active principles. The first makes it criminal to meddle with the interests which would rouse them to purposes of utility; the second stifles the desire of inquiry; and little remains to fill up life, but sensuality or sloth. The decay of public spirit at Rome, occurred at the same time that their arts had risen to great perfection, but it was also at this time that wars, both foreign and civil, raged with the greatest violence; and if their influence had been to chasten the luxurious spirit generated by wealth and refinement, Rome should not have decayed. But the excitement of public business was withdrawn from the many, and centered in a single hand; the population was great; arts and industry were for the most part in the hands of slaves or freedmen; the citizens had little occupation, and the want of printing prevented the extension of education and knowledge. Those causes would have destroyed national spirit, though wealth and its refinements had not existed, and probably more quickly.

The moral benefits of war appear to be reducible to this, that while men are actually in the field they cannot be indulging "La gola, il sonno e le oziose piume*," but as soon as the campaign is over, so is the restraint. Hannibal's troops at Capua illustrate the truth of this opinion. But were it otherwise, wars as they are now conducted, must rage long and

* Appetite, sleep, and indolence.—PETRARCH.

with more than common violence, before their beneficial effects, reach any bosoms but those of a few thousands, chosen from the millions that compose the nation; while its horrors come down upon the defenceless multitudes who had no share in its origin, and no hope in its triumphs. The utility of it, to a people so low in intelligence, or so degraded by their government, as to have no other alternative but to grovel in unchangeable debasement, is but a small concession to its merits. No doubt that American slaves, or Polish and Hungarian boors, if trained to military discipline and inured to war, would return more capable of subsequent civilization. For it is much more by its discipline, than the love of glory inspired by it, that it redeems human character from the lowest stages of degradation. A man compelled at first by the base fear of corporal punishment, to exert his sluggish attention, and control his most inveterate habits, acquires an intelligence and self-command, which are a new nature to him. A sense of honour is awakened within him, by the irresistible influence of opinion, unanimous in all around him; and he who when at home would have licked the dust to escape danger, dares not desert the ranks of his companions in arms. When he has learned to do freely, that which he has hitherto been compelled to do by force, he has taken a step in moral power and intelligence, which renders him susceptible afterwards of the virtues of a citizen. But for a people that are past the dire alternative of being ferocious or stupid, the excitement of war is the worst of all resources against the corruptions of luxury.

Too long have we heard it instilled, that wars are a wholesome training for the people, and a martial spirit the proper counterpoise to the excesses of refinement. Were this as true, as experience proves it to be mistaken, who would desire to spread the pestilence and the fever, because of the noble fortitude, the generous self-devotion, sometimes called forth in the chamber of death? It is a dire preventive for possible evils, to send forth the sons of the country to perish, some of fatigue, some of disease in the damp marshes, some in the carnage of the assault,—the desperate, in the midst of his crimson crimes, the magnanimous, in restraining the arm of the ruffian. "Let any one picture to himself the events that take place within one hundred square yards. That the slain die not all suddenly, nor by one manner of death; that some perish by steel, some by shot, and some by water; that some are crushed and mangled by heavy weights, some trampled upon, and some dashed to atoms by the fiery explosions*." And who that "does justice to the bravery of the soldier and the noble emulation of the officers†," will fail to curse the system that devotes the hearts of the noble, and the spirits of the brave to the works of the demon and the destroyer—to the savage life and the early grave! If these be the fruits of success, what shall we say of the hostile purposes, for which so much has been endured? The wasted plains and smoking cities, which attest the sufferings of the defenceless peasant and citizen; the crowds that have expired, some after all

* NAPIER'S *History of the Peninsular War.* † Ibid.

the protracted sufferings which strong frames could endure,—others in the midst of every concentrated horror that could scare the imagination, before its tortures reached the body; women retiring to vaults and caves to end their miseries, free from insult and outrage; and men made desperate by wrongs no power can redress, no wrath avenge, and no vengeance satisfy. Well was the barren and bitter laurel chosen for the victor's wreath! For even at home, in the very crisis of triumph, how many receive the news, with pallid lips, and bosoms frenzied with fear! Neither are there depths profound enough to shroud the ears of the brethren, the mother, and the wife, from the shouts of victory and the pealing joy-bells.

When the short-lived revelry is over, which rewards the dangers and toils of protracted years of war, what remains to the victorious country? Perhaps a paralyzing debt, and a people groaning with taxes; the springs of political freedom, weakened by the indefinite powers and irresponsible expenditure unavoidably confided to those, who had to provide for the exigencies of the war; shoals of rapacious jobbers who had fattened unperceived on public plunder, and have become too influential to be discarded, or restrained from eating into the vitals of the exhausted country; spirits accustomed to high excitement, thrown back on society, idle, needy, and daring; passions that oppose, and prejudices that mislead the people from industry and amity with other nations, inoculated into every class, and choking up the very sources of returning prosperity. If some of the veterans, who have gathered the

hardy virtues and deep reflection of their stern profession, stand foremost in the honours of their country, how many more, broken down by wounds, toil, care, and climate, sink into neglect and obscurity! while the middle-aged and even the young, unfitted for every employment, poor and disregarded, moulder away a long life in any remote place, where bread is cheap.

March on in all your proud attire,
Ye blooming bands with souls of fire—
Ye that to glory's wreath aspire,
On danger's height hung dreadfully.

March on in all your long array,
With glitt'ring arms and banners gay,
With plumes that on the breezes play,
And music clashing martially.

Charge joyous, through the gazing throng
Ye scatter, as ye pass along;
They hear in your loud cymbal's song,
The glorious sound of victory.

They see in all this gorgeous light
Of steel, and gold, and trappings bright,
Your glad return from conqu'ring fight;
And hail its prospects joyfully.

Alas! through almost blinding tears,
I see you, on your dreadful biers;
That music, to my shudd'ring ears,
Plays but your dirges dismally.

To me, like victims dressed ye go,
While yet in youthful strength ye glow;
For ah! behind the pageant show,
Death follows, pale and silently*.

War is a great school for those who are so low in civilization as to have no better, but its influence is

* By Miss Porter.

feeble compared with that of free institutions, and the arts of peace, which it so often destroys. Many times have its direst scenes been acted, without producing any of its boasted effects in raising national spirit, where that was wanting. But if we were to estimate national spirit by a still higher standard than boldness, and resistance to tyranny; were we to estimate it, by manly disregard of personal indulgence, by personal independence, by general integrity, and by "public faith cleared from the shameful brand of public fraud*," we could attribute but little of such merits to the influence of war, when we remember that the utmost solicitude about eating and drinking, an eager desire for the most frivolous distinctions, an insatiable rapacity for gain by whatever contemptible means, and lastly political corruption, seldom expanded with greater vigour, than during a war, under which a whole generation grew up. The whole fabric shook to the base, corroded in every quarter by malversations, that tinged the cheek of the honest with shame, for the baseness of their countrymen, and indignation at being so unworthily stained with their disgrace. For the very mechanic whose hard-earned pittance was gleaned from the most precarious employments, felt a scorn for the convicted peculator, which the breasts of the high-born were too seared to admit.

* O yet a nobler task awaits thy hand,
(For what can war, but endless war still breed?)
Till truth and right from violence be freed,
And public faith cleared from the shameful brand
Of public fraud. In vain doth valour bleed,
While avarice and rapine share the land.

MILTON'S *Sonnet to Fairfax.*

What the economical and moral condition of the people would have been, without the arts of peace and their effects, may be conjectured from that of France after the wars of Louis XIV. The Mareschal Vauban, whose professional duties had led him to inspect most of the provinces during a period of forty years, divided the people of France into ten parts; of these, one part was reduced to actual beggary: the five parts, next in order, though not subsisting by alms, were on the verge of that condition, and totally unable to contribute anything to the other. "Of the four remaining parts," says Vauban, "three are exceedingly straitened, and encumbered with debts and lawsuits. Lastly, in the tenth, wherein I included the whole of the military, legal, and ecclesiastical bodies, all the nobility, and official persons military and civil, the great merchants and citizens who possess independent incomes, and are best lodged, there are not to be counted more than a hundred thousand families; and of these," continues he, "I do not think I should exaggerate in saying that there are not more than ten thousand high and low, who are really in easy circumstances*."

For the morals that prevailed, the reader of French memoirs may be appealed to, to say what corruption ever attributed to luxury, did not exist in that kingdom, both during the impoverished period alluded to and the times that succeeded, up to the great crisis which reduced the corrupted society to its original elements.

* Say's *Melanges et Correspondence.*

There is, indeed, something so paradoxical in the notion, that wars are essential to that civil boldness and moral vigour which promote national greatness, that it is surprising to hear it so often maintained. Is it not proverbial that the military spirit is adverse to political freedom? As to manners, I should incur derision were I to discuss gravely, whether the habits of soldiers were friendly to morals and temperance. In time of peace, the idleness of the profession leads young men who have never known service, into frivolity and epicurism. It is with great difficulty that such as have better tastes can pursue any study, amidst the interruptions and opposition they meet with. It cannot be urged against this comment, that it is unfair to adduce as the effects of war, the defective qualities of those who have never seen it; or to represent, as the character of the army, the follies or vices that proceed from the mere ignorance and presumption of youth. But the character given is not represented as that of the army, but as that which its circumstances, in peace, tend very much to impose on the young, and which, from the force of early impressions, must remain with many. It is given but as one proof among others, that there is no necessary connexion between the military spirit, and the qualities that preserve national greatness. The effects of the military spirit in time of peace, must be considered in treating of the influence of war, for a standing army is part of the system; if we have the one, we must have the other. The influence of everything must be judged of by all its parts and consequences in conjunction. It would be most

unjust to deny, that the eventful life of a soldier, especially if he have been high in command, calls forth mental and moral qualities of the finest temper, and rarely brought into combination by any other course of life. It is impossible not to look with peculiar respect on the man, whose courage has been always undaunted in the midst of dangers, whose judgment has never been confused by the suddenness of events, and whose sacred regard to the rights of humanity, has never been shaken by the frequent necessity of stern duties, or the provocations arising from the baseness of others. Those who have always resisted the defects incidental to their circumstances, acquire peculiar excellence. But while acknowledging the effects of service in producing many such men, we may not refuse to turn our eyes to the other, and more common aspect of the military profession.

While communities are so small that every individual is at one time or other in the field, or so exposed to the chance that it is always present to his mind, we may understand the apprehension, that a long peace may dissolve their spirit. But why should this idea suggest itself where the soldiery are not a hundredth part of the population? How should the valour of one man in the field, some hundred miles off, give courage to another at his loom? New levies in a martial country are as completely unused to war as if they were taken from the groves of Arcadia; and nations who have rarely known war, supply as good troops as others. Military science might be wanting, (that is a different

consideration,) but not spirit. The Americans produced soldiers as quickly as we did, and what is more remarkable, the Italian troops in Napoleon's service, who might have been supposed less calculated for hard service than others, were said to be amongst the best he had.

It appears, therefore, that every corruption attributed to luxury, is rather fostered than checked by the iron influence of war; that the fierce passions are no corrective to the effeminate; nor is rudeness any preservative against their introduction, but quite the reverse. For the evils that flow from luxury are the natural fruits of an influx of wealth on coarse minds, who know not how to dispose of leisure, and have few tastes except for the gratification of pride or appetite.

But as wealth is only a compendious expression for the command of enjoyments, and that every enjoyment, considered abstractedly, is a good, we are led to inquire what are those common qualities, which, under all the phases society presents in its progress from rudeness to refinement, contribute so often to pervert wealth to a source of corruption. Since the abundance and variety of productions are positive and great benefits, what is the nature or measure of those gratifications, which, not being direct vices in themselves, are condemned because they lead to vice in the end? Is there any standard, by which the influence of things so multifarious as those denominated luxuries can be tried, except some vague notion of excess, impossible to define, and measured rather by some fanciful comparison with the sim-

plicity of our predecessors, than by a clear perception of its actual effects?

If we can agree, as to why, when, and how, things good in themselves produce evil, we shall know what to control, but not otherwise.

Section IV.

How to try the Influence of Luxuries.

In the first section of this chapter, it was observed, that the word luxury applied equally to a high state of art and production, and to self-indulgent habits of life. When historians talk of the progress of luxury, they usually mean the first; but when the term is employed to convey censure, it is chiefly to our manners and habits of life that it is applied. Of course, there is a mutual influence between the two. Manners and habits of life, must regulate the arts and productions of a country very much; but new productions will also in many cases introduce new tastes.

Nevertheless, luxury in art and production, and luxurious manners, are by no means always commensurate; and in treating of the moral effects of luxury, it is essential to consider them separately. I have endeavoured to show that a profusion of the necessaries and conveniences of life, accompanied by a high state of art, was in itself favourable to national manners and morals. But it cannot be denied that among arts and productions, it is possible to produce things, which society would be better without. The necessary consequence

of a high state of art and production, is also to create a variety of classes, professions, trades, and other peculiar conditions, the effects of which on the happiness and character of the individuals engaged in them, are sometimes unfavourable. These must not be overlooked, if we desire to form a just estimate of the effects of luxury. They form one of the most essential branches of the inquiry. Some reflections on these and other direct consequences of the progress of wealth and art will be given under a head, which (for want of a more precise term) shall be called the economical.

Of luxury in habits and manners, it will be expedient, for many reasons, to treat first. It may be distinguished from the other branch, as the more peculiarly moral division of the subject. The reader is requested to recollect the vagueness with which the term luxury is used in common conversation, and that it must not be understood here, as synonymous with vice. The present question is, whether there be any rule or principle by which to limit excess; or to judge what habits and practices, (not being acts of vice in themselves,) have in the end a debasing effect on the character. As enjoyment of any kind, that has no ill consequences either to ourselves or others is pure good, I cannot imagine an objection to any lawful indulgence, except for one of the following reasons.

1st. It may impair moral energy. In the progress of luxury, whatever tends to weaken the power of self-command, may without hesitation be condemned. The want of that essential power, renders

all the other means of moral improvement we possess, nearly inoperative. There is no use in convincing the judgment of one who cannot command his own actions, or providing resources for him who cannot apply them. This head may therefore be placed first.

2nd. An indulgence may destroy the capacity for some greater enjoyment, or the power of being useful to others. Of this nature are habits of life, that confine enjoyment to the excitement of some transitory passion, chiefly animal, and deaden sensibility to the highest pleasures of *human* nature. These pleasures are chiefly those that arise from benevolent and generous sympathies; or habits which if they do not stifle those feelings, still leave us too dependent on personal ease, to encounter a slight inconvenience.

3rd. Our habits may be such as to contract the power and range of thought, and prevent the expansion of our faculties, thus diminishing our sphere of existence. Whatever impedes the acquisition of knowledge, and produces a distaste for mental exertion, has this effect.

4th. Indulgences may tend to produce disease, depression of spirits, or want. Excesses of all kinds lead to these evils; excess is indeed measured by its liability to injure the health, the spirits, or the fortune.

5th. Lastly, our gratifications may be anti-social. Everything in the habits and manners of society, which creates an interest at variance with that of the community, thereby tends to render one party the

common enemy of the rest. However exempt from conscious malignity the party may be, forms of luxury which generate such dissocial interests, must be regarded as among the worst.

Many of the habits of the higher orders of society, both in England and other countries, are objectionable on every principle above suggested. They are such as to destroy all moral energy, and leave us the very slaves of impulse. They generate insensibility or indifference to large classes of the most agreeable and animating emotions, the most ennobling and useful pursuits. They reduce the range of ideas to a miserable and scanty monotony. They enfeeble the health, they impair the fortune, they produce a morbid sensibility to depressing and painful emotions. They create a host of dissocial interests and passions, direct and indirect; direct, by rivalries not founded on the natural and unavoidable competition between parties, where both cannot obtain the same object, but on the mere desire to see others depressed, though nothing be gained by their exclusion, nor lost by their participation; indirect, because the passions excited by the petty distinctions of a frivolous society, have such empire over the minds of its members, that they will uphold the most grievous oppressions to other classes, rather than lose the means of carrying on their ungenerous rivalry. What faction, what enmities between different classes have sprung from this exclusive spirit! How dissevered are the bonds that used to make the English look with pride on their nobles! How much of this unsocial spirit

is to be traced, less to the collision of substantial interests (admitting the most worldly things, ambition and profit, to be such) than from the inordinate value set upon trifles! It is not unusual to see luxuries of station, appearance, or equipage, (held quite indispensable at home, and contended for, as if existence or honour depended on the possession,) discarded as incumbrances when people go abroad, out of reach of those whom they desire to outshine. If these be really the effects of luxury, they are a relapse towards barbarism.

The general characteristics of African and Asiatic barbarians, as described by travellers, have a close resemblance in many respects to the nerveless children of luxury in our refined age. Excessive indolence in everything that does not touch their immediate interests; sluggish apathy, which only yields to fitful and uncontrollable vehemence without the power of perseverance; great pride, by the movements of which they may be drawn for a moment into a generous undertaking, but which they abandon as soon as it gives trouble; sometimes, in the very crisis of affairs which they have been wrought on to undertake, they are seduced by some motive so frivolous, some amusement so childish, that we are half tempted to believe with the slaveholder, that some men can be controlled by nothing but blows. They are alternately compassionate and cruel, because in either case, they are governed by momentary impulses. Moved by the suffering which they witness, they will relieve it with earnest emotion, while the effort costs nothing, or nothing which, in the

moment of excitement, they care for. But withdraw the sufferer from their sight, or touch their pride, their indolence, or their sensuality, and the waxen traces of humanity disappear. Not only will the sufferings of the lowly be disregarded, but for the crossing of their most dishonest interest, they will themselves drive forth their offending victims, to some of the severest ills under which human life can exist.

Thus it is that the creature of mere impulse, whether formed on the banks of the Niger or the Thames, presents features of violence or imbecility, according to the shifting of sands; creating imaginary contrasts in character where there is real resemblance. The feature common to both is the want of controlling force in the mind, to fashion its actions to a fixed and useful design. The greater or less predominance of this moral power in a country, constitutes its greater or less civilization, because it is from thence that the power proceeds of forming good governments and institutions, and of persevering in labour for remote advantages. Hence the difficulty of maintaining good government among a volatile or an effeminate people. While they remain so, a despot would be hardly more mischievous to them than their own moral debility, which leaves them incapable of the public spirit and consistency requisite to form and maintain good institutions. The substitute for this moral vigour, in many parts of the world, is the establishment of fixed and circumscribed ideas and duties, out of which a man is never permitted to wander, and which, therefore, are

grounded strongly in some kind of superstition, or in habit. Men's actions are attempted to be brought nearly to the nature of instincts. The institution of castes is of this description, and is allowed to be one of the worst social systems. The best condition that has sprung from circumscribing and limiting men's ideas, I believe to be that of China, and it will scarcely be envied. The effect of the principle is to keep mankind stationary and unimprovable. In countries where there is moral vigour sufficient to maintain free institutions, people are never long stationary; the general tendency is progressive improvement. But in proportion as the moral vigour, that is, the power of self-control, is relaxed and neglected, in the same degree will the tendency of society be simultaneously towards the vices of turbulence and of weakness. These are, in other words, a relapse towards barbarism.

It is universally admitted, that the character and condition of the whole people must depend very much on that of the higher orders. But the great advantage of popular institutions is, that in this respect the influence of the higher and middle classes is mutual. The character of the middle classes is, to some extent, forced into the highest. The mass of knowledge and industry in England, generates an almost endless diversity of habits and character. The advancement of knowledge is struggling against the downward tendency of excessive luxury. It is penetrating the darkened chambers of the great, and vivifying their pale and listless progeny. It is, therefore, reasonable to hope that we are neither

verging towards decay, like other nations who have reached the summit of luxury, nor likely to close the existing period, by some sanguinary revolution that will clear the way to a new order of things, through the blood and tears of the living race. But the vices and miseries are dreadful, which are eating into the heart of the country: the elements of discord are in fearful activity: the people know too much to be passive, and too little to be virtuous. Let it not be supposed that they, whose sensibilities are awakened by civilization, will be made content by being told that their ancestors were worse lodged than our animals, and their blood spilt like water. There will be no substantial contentment, till the body of the people are so instructed as to know how to use their advantages, for not till then will they either be able to create comfort for themselves, or preserve it, if created for them by others. If the minds of mankind are not in unison with their circumstances, there can be nothing but danger in the country; if they are to suffer intolerable labour and privation, their minds ought to be degraded to those of brutes; if they are to taste of plenty and leisure, and yet be left without moral and mental training in proportion, their vices will destroy the plenty, and spend the leisure in sensuality or outrage. If the importance of the subject were duly felt by the higher orders, their power and wealth would give them the means of having the people properly educated; this would remove the greatest of all the impediments to the improvement of their condition. By removing popular ignorance, they would also avert the worst

danger that threatens the stability of our institutions, and the rights of the higher orders themselves.

But the character formed by luxury, and the prejudices it entails, prevent both the energy and the knowledge such purposes as the above require. Perseverance and the power of struggling against difficulties and opposition are both dependent on self-command, and of this the luxurious are seldom capable. Their incapacity of steady mental exertion prevents their acquiring such knowledge, as would acquaint them with the causes and preventives of the misery and corruption of the people, or such as would teach them to distinguish the real political interests of the country, from the mere purposes of party. It requires some knowledge, even to see clearly that national strength does not mean a standing army, nor national honour a splendid court. The corruptions of luxury may be less, perhaps much less in England, than in most other great countries. That our nobility and men of fortune stand very high in point of knowledge and public spirit, compared with others, may be averred with justifiable pride. The superiority of our institutions and our freedom, attest what the merits of the nobility, and the spirit and firmness of the people must have generally been. But in proportion as a nation recedes from simplicity, and as wealth and population increase, its affairs become more complicated, and greater knowledge become indispensable, to counterbalance the progress of luxury. In this view the higher orders, as a body, have certainly not kept

sufficiently ahead of other classes. If they had, we should not, (with greater means of improvement than were ever before known,) find disunion, misery, and danger gathering round. In point of mere number, it might be admitted that no other country, or no other time ever produced so many men in the ranks of birth, station, and wealth, that were real statesmen, real patriots, or men of distinguished worth and utility in private life. But in their own body, they do not meet with a corresponding spirit to second their efforts, nor often with virtue enough to renounce or modify privileges and powers which, perhaps, could at no period have stood the scrutiny of enlightened legislation, but are now altogether out of keeping with the times. There is not knowledge enough in the body generally, to be convinced what measures are necessary in point of prudence or of justice, nor is there activity enough to assist those who are labouring to such ends. Now the consequence of this is, that the able and the generous in distinguished stations, who see the true state of society in all its branches, who feel for the rights of mankind, and are determined to act for the good of their country, unable to spread general conviction or procure extended co-operation from their own classes, are obliged to carry forward measures of vital interest by appeals to the feelings of the multitude, and by accepting the assistance of demagogues.

It is needless to enlarge on the disadvantage of being able to carry the measures of wisdom and patriotism, only by exciting the passions of those who

have least understanding, and by giving countenance to others who have little honesty. Such however are the unavoidable consequences of the apathy and selfishness springing from luxury in the higher orders. They ought to lead, and be reverenced, instead of which they are often driven, and regarded as enemies. Men of independent fortunes and liberal education have certain advantages, which peculiarly fit them for being leaders and legislators, when they acquire the requisite knowledge and habits, but not otherwise; ignorance and devotion to frivolous pursuits, more than counterbalance the advantages of their position. Less exposed to that bias which professions and trades give to the views of other men, and possessed of a great deal more leisure and command over the sources of information, they are much better placed by their circumstances, for taking a large view of the interests of society. Being more independent in fortune than other men, they have less interest in maintaining particular systems, when at variance with the general good. This fact is not inconsistent with their temptations to selfish policy. The latter unhappily force themselves too much on our attention; but if it were necessary to suffer from the partial interests of a class, we should be probably better in their hands, than in those of any other section of society. For the reasons above stated, their prejudices and exclusive interests are probably less intense, and less hurtful than those of a body composed entirely of legal, of clerical, of mercantile men, or any other particular profession or class. In countries where the nobles are the most ignorant and

corrupted body in the state, the case might be just the reverse.

The distinguishing moral character of the middle classes, proceeds in a great measure from their being principally engaged in trades and professions. Each of these may perhaps be attended by its own particular moral evils, but the general tendency of all such employments, is to instil what are compendiously styled, "habits of business," that is, such command over the thoughts and inclinations, as to enable men to persevere in doing what is irksome, till it has ceased to be difficult to them to do so, and to give them the power of resisting present temptations, which have possibly no other evil than being ill-timed or idle. These efforts are made for a reward so distant, that they can be justly regarded only as a triumph of principle. From such training, it follows that they generally have the power to practise, whatever they can be brought to acknowledge and feel as a duty. This important power, however acquired, even for mere self-interest, is always one of the greatest safe-guards of society. He who possesses it, may have views which render him individually more odious than the weak man of pleasure, but there is this difference, if you can convince his reason or touch his feelings, you are pretty certain either to correct, or greatly restrain his defects. But by a weak person, conviction, in its proper sense, is seldom felt at all, and when it is, it has no influence over his conduct. Self-control then, is the essential quality, without which education, that is, mental instruction, has very little moral influence.

In discussions respecting the spreading of knowledge among the poor, it is sometimes urged with great plausibility, that the most defective education received by the upper classes, comprises more actual knowledge, than is ever proposed for the body of the people; and we are asked why we expect from such knowledge a moral effect on the lower class, which it so often fails to produce on the higher. But for this expectation there are solid reasons. Without diverging from the present subject so far, as to enter at length into the great deficiency of moral instruction received by the poor, and the fallacious hopes really entertained by some people, from the acquisition of mere reading and writing, it should be observed that the too classes are not standing in the same relation to the advantages of knowledge. On the lower, there is every reason to believe that mental instruction would produce a rapid and striking improvement, though it might not do everything.

The children of the gentry return from schools and colleges where, even supposing that no mismanagement has been corrupting the morals while unfolding the abilities, their restraints and dulness give enchantment to the pleasures of home. The power of self-command imperfectly acquired by school discipline, when not confirmed by the precepts and sentiments of the parents, is easily lost by the cessation of restraint at the very age the passions have gained strength. The son of the poor man, on the contrary, steps from the compulsory lessons of the school, to the iron rule of labouring for bread. He must learn to endure fatigue, to resist temptation, to obey hard

masters, and to persevere through frequent difficulties, sufferings, and disappointments. From this rough exercise, the poor acquire many qualities of no slight merit. There is indeed no specific for human depravity. In a thick population there will always be some who will prefer alternate riot and famine to regular industry. From several causes, the amount of vice among them is terrific. Till very lately, the laws which affected them, in many cases held out a premium on misconduct. It cannot be said that the effects of education have ever yet been fairly tried, except in a few instances and to a limited extent. I believe I am justified in saying that wherever they have been so tried, the result has surpassed expectation. We may rather wonder at all the good we still find, than at the corruption. We know that in this country assiduity is indispensable to ward off poverty; and perhaps all those who maintain themselves decently, entirely by their own labour, may be regarded as a body of people, habitually actuated by an honourable spirit of independence, capable of resisting the force of daily and urgent temptations, and bearing undauntedly many severe hardships. We are sometimes unjust to the principles of men in this class of life, because we measure them by their defections from the refined and punctilious interpretation of the laws of truth and honour, which form the standard of a gentleman. But their standard, though too low, may stand firmly where it is placed. The unrefined, half-educated mechanic or labourer, may disgust us by a disregard of veracity, in which he discerns no more evil, than we do in the

tacit conventions of customary prudence. We cover our lawful designs and sentiments, and our family affairs from the knowledge of men, by many disguises justifiable by the most rigid integrity, but not always separable from the deceits of coarser minds, by a line definite enough for their apprehensions. Men may err on such points, and yet be very trustworthy on others, where they are convinced there is a duty. The vices of such men are attributable either to this grossness of feeling, to strong passions, in which we see what is yielded to and not what has been resisted, harsh tempers, or to that ignorance which entails positive corruption of principle on some point, making wrong appear really right. Over these the unfolding of the understanding has direct and positive influence. We all get three educations, says Montesquieu, that of home, of the schools, and of the world. The different schooling the world gives to the poor man and the rich, strengthens the one, but debilitates the other. The corruption of the first, may make him burst into a laugh of contempt at a proposal of disinterested generosity; but if you can reform his opinions, you will find in him the power of acting up to what he thinks right. The corruption of luxury on the contrary destroys moral energy; this is its general effect. Not that the vices even of the rich, can have no other cause, or are always accompanied by moral feebleness. Even in cases where the want of self-command upon some point is evident, it does not invariably follow that such is the general character of the mind upon other points.

It is not meant to palliate want of moral restraint

under any circumstances, but perhaps that culpable disregard of the rules of sobriety, which occasionally presents a painful inconsistency in the characters of distinguished men, may be partly attributed to the consciousness of possessing sufficient energy to cast off the trammels of pleasure when they please. But their example is baneful. It lessens the discredit due to vicious excesses, it obliterates the warning from the paths of destruction; and there is not one person in a thousand who can yield to habitual excess, without being enfeebled and dishonoured. "A man of pleasure," is almost synonymous with one who is weak and useless.

When the vigour of the mind is destroyed, though refinement of taste and imagination should remain, they will assist people to feel nobly and tenderly only while they are talking, but will not prevent them from leaving their debts unpaid, to indulge the most selfish expenses, thereby casting widows and orphans into penury, and driving the hard-working tradesman first to fraud, and next to bankruptcy: the sons of self-indulgence *cannot* make the sacrifices required to be honest and humane. There is little use in appealing to their justice or their compassion, though susceptible of both; you may rouse their emotion by descriptions of the misery that waters the bread of the poor man with his tears, but unless it can be relieved by putting their hand into their pocket, they go away and forget what they felt. Even while their indolence is bringing ruin on their own heads, no picture of the tenfold privations, the trouble, the mortifications, timely

exertion might avert, produces any practical effect. You may appal their spirits, but you cannot give them energy. In this state of mind, when even the impulses of common compassion (the last benevolent feeling that abandons the breast) have so little result, the virtues of the citizen fail altogether. There is neither patriotism nor political integrity. Incapacity of self-denial, even for the most important self-interests, combines with the cravings of pride and pleasure, and produces a pertinacious and disgraceful resistance to every reform, that closes the avenue to dishonest gains, or mischievous monopolies. Men so enfeebled lose even that claim upon social estimation due to those, who are actively useful though evidently spurred on only by selfish considerations. They who think our own country offers no such examples, will not deny the truth of the picture as found in other nations: it shows the tendencies of the vice, whether we have reached its depths or not.

In England, many things contribute to counteract the moral inertness produced by luxury, and to prevent its universality. The high perfection of our arts tends to stimulate mental activity. The spectacle of improvement in every department, cannot be presented to the attention without awaking in many persons an interest in the promotion of prosperity; their bosoms respond to the exhibition of grandeur and utility. The agreeableness of seeing things effected easily and successfully, by ingenious instruments on simple principles, frequently allures people into pursuits they would otherwise not have thought

of. The resources of art kindle curiosity, and awake desire for that knowledge which is offered in so many agreeable forms; and the taste for pursuit is a remedy for many moral evils. Sufficient credit is not always given to the moral influence of such things; we see the corruptions that exist, we do not see all that are averted. Let us compare our English nobles with those of countries where art and knowledge are less diffused, and we shall see a great difference; some part of it must surely be referred to the continuous exhibitions of art, industry, and enterprise by which they are surrounded. But the greatest of all correctives is to be found in our political institutions.

It has sometimes been denied, that the nature of their government is sufficient to account for the mental torpor remarkable in some nations. It has been assumed that though want of freedom may repress the expression of political opinions, there can be no reason why poetry, science, and general literature, should not flourish as well under despotisms as free institutions. This may be true of poetry, which more than anything else depends upon irresistible impulse, and withdraws the mind from the mere mechanism of life: but it is very far otherwise with regard to literature, and even science. Neither the use or the pleasure of science can be well understood, till people have advanced pretty far in the acquisition. But men are seldom born with such a propensity to mental labour as to exert it for objects, the value of which they can scarcely conceive: men are in general still more averse to exerting their minds

than their bodies without a strong motive. If they can be persuaded to exert them energetically in the acquisition of any one branch of useful knowledge, they will indeed the more readily discern the value and interest of others, but the first step is the great difficulty; it is harder to conquer the *vis inertiæ* than to go on. Therefore, when the greatest, the most efficient, most natural of all excitements to knowledge and activity, is withdrawn from the non-laborious classes, the number of those who betake themselves to science and literature for their own sakes, will be small. There is also so close a connection between the power of thinking deeply on any subject, and the disposition to think freely on all, that jealous governments look coldly on any pursuit that calls forth the power of bold and comprehensive investigation. Abstract sciences are, however, the least ominous to them; for if, on the one side, they afford the highest practice of reasoning, on the other, they are the most remote from the interests and passions of daily life; and if pursued with any great effect, they commonly absorb the whole attention.

But the number of men who have the power, the inclination, and the means of carrying on abstruse speculations, though it seem great in a catalogue of illustrious names, may yet be far too small to raise the intellectual and moral character of their country: the rest, without a motive for mental exertion, will sink into apathy. We have proof of this in countries fertile in genius, which have produced literary and scientific examples of the

highest order of merit, but in which the general sloth and ignorance of the upper classes serve to perpetuate the dull and chilling influence of governments, more careful to strengthen their cells and dungeons, than to draw forth the energies of their people.

> Slow through the sunless air, incessant falls
> The rain accurst, eternal, cold, and drear,
> Tainting the earth, that drinks th' unwholesome drops.
>
> DANTE—*Inferno.*

SECTION V.

Digression on the Nature of Habit.

Before attempting to bring our habits of life to the moral tests proposed in the last section, I request the earnest attention of the reader to the theory of habit, taken from Bishop Butler. It will serve to exhibit the process through which certain indulgences, not in themselves directly criminal, operate in depraving the character.

BISHOP BUTLER'S *Analogy*, notwithstanding the acknowledged excellence of the work, is not universally read. The style of the author will, indeed, bear rigid scrutiny, because it is exempt from all ambiguity or carelessness; but the subject itself is one that requires the capacity of patient and fixed attention, to discern the relations of ideas, very abstract, and which must be kept in the mind definitely, and without variation. To many persons, therefore, it is dry and difficult. Even among those who take a strong moral interest in the subject, some have contracted, from light reading, the habit of

being content with vague and inaccurate ideas. This makes them go through the work with an imperfect apprehension of its force; they catch a meaning which suffices to carry on the context and lead them to a result, which they willingly assent to, but it does not acquaint them with the extensive and practical sense of the author. Even the intense interest more vigorous minds take in the progress of the argument, sometimes withdraws their attention from the full value of the excellent collateral truths, scattered through the book. This, I think, has been the case with the theory of habit: it is a piece of philosophy of so much practical utility, that had it been duly appreciated, it would have formed a leading principle in every work upon education. Maxims might have been drawn from it and imprinted as rules of conduct on the minds, both of teachers and learners. "We all know the importance of habit," the teachers will say, but they might add, "very few of us know how to avail ourselves of it successfully." The popular writers who have adverted to Butler's theory have neither been numerous, nor sufficiently urgent and explanatory. It has rather been referred to, philosophically, to account for what is, than made familiar and practical, to bring people to what they might be.

These reasons must plead an apology to the better informed, for minutely and tediously explaining what to them is familiar. Though written with a very earnest desire for their sanction, yet it is not for their service that this work has been composed. Such readers, when they see through the argument,

can easily pass over mere explanations; and when they consider for whose use the following definitions are intended, they will not reject them as superfluous.

Habit is the aptitude, for any actions or impressions, produced by frequent repetition of them.

In the above definition the term "impression" is used to express every affection of mind or body, received from any external agency, and which is independent of our own will. For instance, the sound of the carriages in the street is an impression produced upon our organs of hearing, and over which our will has no control. While it is there we have no power not to perceive it, or to perceive it otherwise than as it is, louder or softer, higher or lower. A stroke or a wound, besides its corresponding bodily impression, might be also accompanied by another, of a moral nature; surprise, anger, or some similar emotion might be excited within us, and equally independent of our will. It is the same in more complicated cases, for whatever we do, however intensely we may be engaged in voluntary exertions, part of the affair is always an impression over which our will has no control. Sounds, sights, odours, are conveyed to our senses, ideas and events are conveyed to our apprehension, which excite emotions of joy and sorrow, surprise, fear, anger and many other affections, without any power of choice on our part. The most animated of our pursuits, and the most dependent on our determined efforts, the battle or the chase, the song or the dance, are attended by a variety of sensations and emotions, which are quite

involuntary. We may repress the expression of them,—we may avert our eyes or turn our thoughts from the subject that excites the feeling, but in no case can we *will* away the effect, while the cause is present.

The word action in the definition, implies, on the contrary, some effort which it depends on ourselves to make. In common discourse the word and its adjective, "active," are chiefly applied to matters that imply bodily movements; it is used in contra-tradistinction to sedentary pursuits, or to idleness. But in the present sense it implies every mental as well as corporeal exertion, depending upon the will; reasoning, resolving, attending, observing, are as truly action, in this sense, as if accompanied by muscular exertion. They are all voluntary, though the impressions, the actions occasion, are not so. A man standing determinedly still is as active as when in movement, in the sense considered, but the weariness which comes in consequence is an impression; this he may bear, but cannot will away. And so also in matters of pure speculation; if we suppose some question to arise, as, whether one mathematical figure be equal to another, or, whether it be probable that the sun be an habitable world, we know it is wholly in our own power, either to direct our attention to those subjects or not; we can enter into the chain of reasoning they require, or forbear; but if we do engage in it, there will result a perception that the proposition is true, that it is false, or that it is uncertain, and over this we shall have no control. It is an impression produced by the nature of the

things themselves, and we shall not be able, by any effort, to think it different. We shall not be able to think angles equal, that the reasoning has shown to be unequal, nor a supposed fact positively true or positively false, which our arguments have left doubtful. But in employing this illustration it will not be without use to observe, that a fact being "doubtful" does not mean that in itself, it is neither positively true nor positively false. The word only means that we have no means of ascertaining the truth. This fact is sometimes strangely overlooked. In respect to all such phenomena as we are now considering, the mind is passive, not active. It is active as to the effort of inquiry, passive as to the perceptions arrived at.

When we use the expressions, "act of seeing, act of hearing," and similar ones, the word "act" is not perfectly synonymous with "action." It signifies any condition, (whether passive or active,) that is brought into *effect*, instead of being only *possible*. The "act of seeing," therefore, means the condition of seeing, without specifying whether that condition be brought about by voluntary effort, or the contrary.

If we make an effort to see or to hear, the effort is indeed an action, because it is voluntary, but it is distinguishable from the impressions on our senses; and the distinction is incorporated into all language. For notwithstanding the rude minds that have constructed that wonderful instrument, yet the incessant practice of it, and the endless variety of purposes for which expressions were required, gradually brought out and supplied its deficiencies. The events of the

moment caused thoughts and feelings to be observed and discriminated in a manner, which rude minds would never have thought of, had they sat down to speculate on the subject. The words introduced into language, gave a very good picture (as far as they went) of the powers and properties of human nature, long before philosophers undertook to analyse it. General experience tells us that if noise and light come to the senses, we perceive them whether we will or not, and that if something affecting be conveyed to our understanding, we cannot help being afflicted, pleased, or surprised, as the case may be. By the same means we know we have, on many occasions, voluntary power to shun or to seek those perceptions, by removing or promoting the causes of them; and that we have often occasion to express both the active and passive condition. Hence we find in all languages such distinctions as to see and to look, to hear and to listen, classed in grammar as active or neuter verbs. One of our most common expressions is, to call the ideas suggested to us by external events, our impressions, but we could not apply the term to anything depending on our own will,—all such are our actions, whether mental or bodily.

Active habits then are those which are formed by action, whether of mind or body, agreeably to the foregoing explanations; and their contrary, in this sense, is not sedentary or idle, but passive; a word which signifies, the condition of merely receiving impressions.

This distinction is also found in familiar language.

It is rather a nice and delicate perception, that leads us to denominate the stronger emotions of the mind, our passions. For being in so great a degree the *excitements* to action, and often exhibiting themselves in bodily exertions of great violence, (especially in the case of angry and contentious emotions) our passiveness with respect to the emotions themselves might not have been immediately apparent. It might easily have been confused with the activity which the passions inspire.

It is indeed essential to keep in mind, that the intensity of a sensation or emotion does not prevent our passiveness in respect to it. The bodily excitement of a person under the influence of a strong passion may be very great, but, like a person in convulsions, the more violent his gesticulations, the more passive is he under the force impelling him.

In colloquial discourse, a passive temper is used to express the temper that submits unresistingly to injury, but it must not be forgotten, that as far as the *impressions* of wrong and injury are concerned, the most vindictive person is exactly as passive as the other. In neither case were the emotions felt at all dependent on their own will; but the vindictive person is said not to be passive, because he has proceeded to voluntary measures of retaliation; and these are unquestionably active, whether they be mere words and mental devices, or blows and conflicts.

If the foregoing explanations be attended to, it will not be necessary, in applying the theory to practice, to analyze every trifling process going on in

our minds. Often it would be hard to say whether our minds were entirely passive, or slightly exerting some active power. And however important the question might be to a metaphysician, trying to unfold the laws of thought, to a moralist such subtlety would be useless. The very fact, that an action or impression was so slight it could scarcely be defined, or so mixed it could scarcely be analyzed, would be sufficient to prove its influence either way to be trifling. In morals, such subtle refinements rather tend to frivolize and bewilder the judgment. If we apply a moral doctrine to all cases that are palpable, we may be sure we are applying them to all that are influential. No one can doubt that, in many cases, our employments leave us nearly quite passive, in others that we are active. When we are reading a tale, listening to a song, attending the theatre, the impressions on our senses and imagination are what constitute the employments. The slight efforts of active power required to procure the enjoyments, in a moral point of view, may be fairly thrown out of the account, and the occupations classed as wholly passive. In other employments, so much active power is required, that we have no hesitation in considering such occupations as active. In some cases, the active exertion itself constitutes the pleasure or a great part of it. Notwithstanding the disagreeable notions annexed to the words toil, trouble, fatigue, it is certain that exertion is loved for its own sake. How many persons prefer gardening and painting with their own hands, to having the gardens and pictures done for them! In bodily

exercise the action itself is frequently the sole and ultimate object. And though the disinclination to mental labour, in mankind generally, is at first sight very striking, yet after the effort to conquer it has been made, no taste is more strong and durable than that for mental exertion.

The effects of habit are universally felt. "I have been used to it," is a reason that accounts satisfactorily for the ease and pleasure with which we execute, what to others is laborious or irksome. It is a sufficient apology for our inability to dispense with enjoyments, which nine-tenths of mankind never feel the want of at all. By custom we become wholly insensible to sensations, which at first were keen. The heat and cold to which the body becomes inured are often surprising. Labour which at first is exhausting, becomes by practice just sufficient to procure appetite and sleep. A sick chamber, a surgical operation, a dissecting room, are among the most oppressive and dispiriting, the most terrible and disgusting scenes, which the duties of humanity call upon us to attend. But the medical man becomes used to them all. He becomes insensible to most of their unpleasant circumstances, and absorbed by the interests of his profession. It is by these, that is, by the ends to which his active exertions are directed, that the character of his mind and the current of his feelings become tinctured, not by the gloomy and nauseating objects he witnesses daily. The cold and sordid are engrossed solely by the prospects of advancement and gain, which are the motives they act from; the generous by that

search for the true and the useful which is the object of their exertions, and by the splendid and comprehensive views which their science unfolds. Whatever their motive, they equally learn to overlook the offensive objects by which they are surrounded, or to bear them with a facility impossible to other men. Medical men frequently acquire a penetrating sympathy for the suppressed sorrows and sufferings their profession brings before them, which, joined to the variety and greatness of their speculations, gives a peculiar charm to their conversation and friendship.

Jurisprudence is a fine study. The rights of human beings, and the laws that regulate them, possess a natural interest. But it is said that it requires a deep and extensive acquaintance with law, before the student discerns the connexion of the numerous enactments, which have sprung from successive events, with the great principles of the science. In the mean time, the study is dry and laborious; it neither unfolds the wonderful mechanism of nature, nor interests the feelings for human adventures, nor excites the imagination "by thoughts that breathe and words that burn." The student must sit the livelong day at an amalgam of toil and dullness; but, before the perception of unity of design and consistency in the parts, has begun to relieve the labour of studying precedents, habit has given him the power of fixing his attention. This once engaged, time glides on unperceived or interrupted only by emotions of satisfaction at gaining the points he was seeking for. The object of his

active pursuit is what chiefly affects him; the labour of the search and the dulness of the road he forgets.

The trade of a butcher is supposed unpleasant, and we wonder it is so easy to fill it, but butchers are not more dissatisfied than other men. The operation of cleaning and curing fish is one of the most offensive to the passengers that can well be selected; but the groups of noisy women engaged in it on the wild sea-shore, blown by the wind, and damp with the salt spray, are not less happy than milkmaids.

The argument from habit is sometimes either designedly or ignorantly misapplied. Whether it be really from hasty and inaccurate thinking, from reluctance to be troubled with the grievances of others, or the more directly selfish design of throwing a screen over ills that we profit by, it is certain very strange powers are sometimes attributed to habit. Not content with regarding it as the most powerful agent in modifying our feelings and faculties, some people make it a remedy for every evil, as if it could overrule the strongest laws of nature. We hear it appealed to, to palliate the evils of tyranny and op pression, of privations that entail disease or decrepitude, or that blight the very affections and faculties for which life is alone desirable. But whenever habit does succeed in stifling the lawful affections and desires implanted by the Creator, it is at the expense of that moral and intellectual character, which it ought to be the object of all government and all education to promote.

Hitherto the effects of habit have been consi-

dered chiefly as they lessen the uneasiness of things originally disagreeable, and make pleasures that are customary become necessaries of life. But it is no less certain that habit, which blunts the edge of pain, blunts that of pleasure too. We become as insensible to pleasurable impressions as to painful ones: that we have heard a thing often is a reason for being disgusted with the repetition. Even continual novelty, such as is presented by travelling, in certain cases generates indifference to the excitement itself; "I have seen so much I care for nothing," is familiar to our ears. Disgust at every pleasure that can be addressed either to the senses or imagination, is so common a feeling among those whose habits consist solely in the pursuits of pleasure, that stolid indifference to every excitement, is frequently affected as a proof of belonging to the circle of fashion.

How are we to account for these apparent contrarieties? Why do the painful impressions of the physician, and the pleasing ones of the sensualist, both lose their vivacity? If the nature of repetition be to blunt sensibility to every class of impressions, what is it sustains and increases the interest men take in their professional duties, and why does the habit of pleasure become irresistible, if the excitements it offers are daily growing weaker? Such are, however, the facts. An introductory view of Bishop Butler's solution may be given as follows; and his theory shall afterwards be quoted in his own words.

The effect of habit is to increase our *propensity* towards every impression, and every active exertion

that is at all consonant to our nature. But the nature of impressions, under which the will remains passive, is to lose their vivacity. Hence, when the impressions in which the will has no part are disagreeable, they become by degrees more and more bearable, till, in many cases, they cease even to be noticed: and when they are agreeable, while habit is increasing the *propensity* to them, sensibility to them is however more and more blunted. With the exertion of voluntary power, it is quite different; the *power* increases by habit, as well as the *propensity*. The greater the practice of active power, (mental or bodily) the greater the power becomes, and the effect of habit in stimulating the propensity to any practice, is as strong in the case of active exertion as of passive indulgence.

It follows that the habit of indulging in passive impressions*, without any active power being called forth, wears out the power of enjoyment, while the propensity for it gains empire. The craving for pleasure remains, while the sense of enjoyment is lessening; hence the palate calls for stronger stimulants, the imagination for newer and higher excitements. The player must double his stake, the drunkard his dose; for the vain and arrogant, flattery must be grosser, concession more abject; rivalry and ostentation require more gorgeous and far-fetched display, and the end of all is, at best, a state of

* In strictness, the expression "passive impressions" is tautology, but it is preserved, because it is employed by Butler for the purpose of denoting the impressions which are not followed by any active effort.

querulous ennui; but far worse, when the downward path leads to the ruined nerves and settled despondency of the drunkard, or to the consuming hopes and fears whose deadly issues madden the gambler's brain, as his eye closes to every form of beauty, and his heart to every natural affection.

On the contrary, if our habits be active, while our propensities to them are increasing, so are the means of indulgence; our powers grow stronger by practice, and the disagreeable passive impressions attendant on our pursuits, are losing their keenness in obedience to their nature. In the zeal of pursuit, the gloom of the workshop, the heat of the forge, the cold of the ship's deck, and the dangers of the field are often forgotten altogether. Little is felt except the exhilarating enjoyment annexed by nature to the exertion of our faculties. Nor is the growing delight in active pursuit which we acquire by habit, the only advantage it has over a more passive condition: it appears, at least, to economise sensibility to passive pleasures. The deadening influence of habit falls mostly on the sense of labour or self-denial, required by the active pursuit, while the pleasures and indulgences, which are the chief incitements to our activity, preserve their freshness*. In confirmation of these views, it may be observed in passing, that pleasures which depend a good deal on active exertion of some kind, preserve their spirit longest, such is the chase, such are games of skill; it is that active attention which accounts for the continuance of the amusement

* See Note A. at the end of the volume.

they afford, while the stake that is played for is insignificant. In professed card-players, the activity required is upon the whole so slight, that we should certainly describe their existence as remarkably passive; but the intellectual effort is plainly greater in games of skill than of chance; shaking a dice-box, cannot, in the present view, be considered as any active effort at all. The interest felt by the gambler consists in the excitement of very strong passive emotions. And his case shall serve to exemplify another and most important difference, between the effects of active and passive habits. Passive indulgence leaves the mind merely exhausted; active exertion, on the contrary, preserves sensibility to pleasure: the spirits are easily excited. How delightful are rest and refreshment after the labours of business and close application! But the man who has taken his fill of high passive excitement, cannot find relief from his exhaustion in any exertion. A mere lover of pleasure is usually unfitted for everything; and the violence of the gambler's excitements leave his spirits as much exhausted and jaded, as they could be by mental or muscular labour, disproportioned to the constitution and strength. Persons of excitable feelings find more exhaustion from spending eight hours reading a novel, than from studying algebra; and those who are accustomed to education, frequently find excitable children peevish and wayward after unusual amusement. I believe it is usually found, that they whose habits are those of high excitement from passive impressions, spend the intervals of their time, in a state of great discomfort,

with a sense of weariness and insipidity, that admits of no relief from employment.

> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to them all the uses of this world!

These explanations will, I trust, assist the younger readers to take in the full force of Butler's argument, which is as follows:—

"For distinctness" (says Butler, see chap. v.), "we may consider habits as belonging to the body or the mind; and the latter will be explained by the former. Under the former are comprehended all bodily activities or motions, whether graceful or unbecoming, which are owing to use; under the latter, general habits of life and conduct; such as those of obedience and submission to authority, or to any particular person; those of veracity, justice and charity; those of attention, industry, self-government, envy, revenge. And habits of this latter kind, seem produced by repeated acts as well as the former. And in like manner as habits belonging to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles, *i. e.* by carrying them into act, or acting upon them: the principles of obedience, veracity, justice and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles, because it is only these inward principles exerted, that are strictly *acts* of obedience, of veracity, of justice, of charity. So likewise habits of attention, industry, self-government, are in the same manner acquired by exercise; and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence,

whether in outward act, or in thought and intention, *i. e.* inward act; for such intention is an act. Resolutions also to do well are properly acts. And endeavouring to enforce upon our own minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these therefore may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well and forming fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him, who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.* form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations. For from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker. Thoughts by often passing through the mind are felt less sensibly; being accustomed to danger begets intrepidity, *i. e.* lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical* habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us, it follows that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motive, and excitements†, whilst these motives and excitements themselves are by

* See Note B. at the end of the volume.

† "Motives and excitements," signify the motives and excitements of some natural affection, such as hope, fear, &c., under which we are passive. They may move us to action, but are not actions themselves.

proportionable degrees growing less sensible, *i. e.* are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this; for active * principles at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be, somehow, wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned may afford instances of it. Perception of danger, is a natural excitement of passive fear and active caution; and, by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity and actively to relieve it; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out and relieve distressed persons, and he cannot but grow less and less affected with the various miseries of life, with which he must become acquainted; when yet at the same time benevolence considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen, and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also, at the time that the daily instances of men's dying around us, give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men†; *i. e.* to forming a

* The passive impression of fear, pity, &c., when they move us to action, are called "active principles"—observe lower down where the expression is so explained, "benevolence considered not as a *passion*, but as a practical *principle of action*."

† See Note C. at the end of the volume.

habit of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again farther to show, that passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet can have this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of action; *and that it is not being affected so and so, but acting* which forms those habits. Only it must be always remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves are a species of virtuous action. Nor do we know how far it is possible in this nature of things, that effects should be wrought in us at once equivalent to habits, *i. e.* what is wrought in us by use and exercise. However the thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what is in fact the appointment of nature, which is, that active habits are to be formed by exercise. Their progress may be so gradual as to be imperceptible in its steps; it may be hard to explain the faculty, by which we are capable of habits, throughout its several parts; and to trace it up to its original, so as to distinguish it from all others in our mind, and it seems as if contrary effects were to be attributed to it. But the thing in general, that our nature is formed to yield, in some such manner as this, to use and exercise, is matter of certain experience.

"Thus by accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on, a facility, a readiness, and often a pleasure in it. The inclinations which rendered us averse to it grow weaker: the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary ones, but the real, lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves,

of course, to our thoughts on all occasions, and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger absolutely in themselves by exercise, as well as relatively with regard to contrary principles, which by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed, and many habitudes of life, not given by nature, but which nature directs us to acquire."

I shall extend these extracts by a very good application of this doctrine of habits, though unhappily ill expressed, which occurs in FELLOWES's *Religion without Cant*, in one of the notes, p. 362:—"It has been said that our active habits are strengthened and our passive weakened by exercise*. Thus the pain which is felt at the sight of miserable objects is diminished by the frequency of the spectacle; but if the active principle of compassion be exercised as well as the passive, the willingness to relieve objects of misery is increased in proportion as the pain which they cause becomes less, or as the disagreeable impressions which they make on the system wear away. Hence it is right, not only to indulge a passive sympathy, but as much as possible to cherish and to exert the principle of active beneficence, for by this means the painful feelings which a miserable object causes will become less in degree, while the pleasurable feelings derived from active goodness will increase as the habit is matured.

* See Note D. at the end of the volume.

But if we cherish only the passive feeling without exerting the active energies of compassion, the disposition will receive a tendency to cruelty, for the impressions which sights of wretchedness make, being diminished in strength by familiarity, and the decay of the passive, not being associated with a proportionate increase in the active habit of benevolence, the person will at last come, not only to be affected with no painful feelings from, but take pleasure in, the spectacle, and perhaps even in the production of misery. Hence we may easily learn how, in many cases, the character which is termed cruel is formed. The feeling of compassion is by degrees weakened, and the active principle of beneficence is not proportionably strengthened, till the misery of others, ceasing to produce pain, causes at last positive pleasure*. I need not, I trust, anticipate the sagacity of the reader in applying some of these remarks to the subject of education, nor need I remind him that they tend to show in what manner the habit of sentimental and pathetic novel-reading, while it seems to soften, tends, in fact, to harden the heart; and I think they will furnish a clue to discover why Rousseau, Sterne, and other writers, remarkable for passive sentimentality, were so deficient in practical benevolence."

Thus is solved the paradox of right reason and wrong practice, kind feelings and cruel conduct.

There is a great delusion in attempting to give good habits, without acting upon the true nature of habit. Among women, to whom chiefly is entrusted

* See Note E. at the end of the volume.

the whole authority over our early years, and perhaps the chief influence during adolescence, how many are there who have ever reflected on the constitution of the human mind, and formed to themselves any definite plan founded on its nature? Why do young persons of both sexes, who have had what is called an excellent education, that is, who have been kept day after day victims to a pedantic uniformity of lessons and rules, instead of acquiring the habit of them, fling all aside for ever, from the first hour they are free from compulsion? Why do they who have spent their whole youth in sober regularity bolt from their course like untamed racers, the instant they are placed in a new scene? Plainly because, as declared by Butler in the quotations, "habits of mind cannot be formed by any external course of action, further than as that course of action proceeds from an inward principle." *Some* habit will be formed, but it will not be what the teacher is aiming at, because the right inward principle which ought to be exercised, is not exercised. The inward principle required to give habits of industry, temperance, good temper, and so forth, is the express intention of being industrious, temperate, and gentle, and regulating one's actions accordingly. But the inward principle exercised by a routine of irksome restraints, submitted to passively on no other grounds but the laws of authority or the influence of fashion, or imposed merely as the necessary condition of childhood, may be only that of yielding to present impressions. He who in youth yields passively to fear

or force, in after life may be found to yield equally to pleasure or temper; the habit of yielding to present impressions, in the first case, prepares the mind for yielding to them in the second, without any attempt at self-control.

The necessity of reducing the young, in the first instance, to implicit obedience, and the utility of a strict routine of duties is not hereby disputed. The impressions arising from every species of restraint and coercion, whether from the command of another or our own reason, being almost invariably unpleasant at first, it is necessary, (on the theory of habit,) to weaken their force by repetition, before the principle of self-government can be expected to act. But the point insisted on is, that weakening the pain of restraint and of submission to rules, will not necessarily create an intention of adhering to the rules, when coercion ceases. An intention is a mental action, and even when excited, it is neither impossible nor uncommon that the practice of forming intentions may be accompanied by the practice of breaking them; and as the shame and remorse of so doing wear out through frequency, a character of weakness is formed. The great truth unfolded by the view Butler has taken of habit, and contrasted with the common and inaccurate ideas on the subject is, that no moral habit is formed by a course of actions, except so far as the actions proceed from an inward principle. The internal sentiment a person acts from, forms the habit that is really gaining strength. The external acts exercise nothing but the muscles. These, by

particular practices, will acquire a facility and aptness for certain bodily movements; but a bodily habit is a different thing from a moral habit, and is not the thing sought. Compelling a man to walk to church every day may give him the habit of walking, or that of walking at a particular hour, but will not give him the habit of going to church, unless an inward principle have been exercised too. If there have been in the mind a special purpose of being a regular attendant at church, in that case, and not otherwise, will the habit of it be formed. Even then it may not be the habit expected and aimed at, that is given. The habit serious people expect to create, by enforcing assiduous attendance at church or at family prayers is, that of reverential attention to religion; but it may fail altogether. If the mind be not moved by that special end and intention, submission to the rule of external action may spring from nothing but the apprehension of censure, or even absolute hypocrisy; and in all such cases, these (the actuating motives) will be the habits of mind that are formed. And in like manner, acts of beneficence proceeding from vanity will form the habit of vanity, not that of beneficence. A man who gains the reputation of boldness and candour because he utters severe truths, if actuated by spleen or envy, may only be cherishing these dispositions, and, on other occasions, may be as capable of manœuvre or artifice as any smooth-tongued courtier in Europe.

Now the young may be subjected to a species of coercion, which may give many useful facilities of muscular operations, and the senses may be quick-

ened. The eye, ear, and tongue may acquire an aptness which at first they had not; dancing, fencing, and many other arts may be made easy by practice. And yet these bodily habits may be accompanied throughout, with a secret determination to abandon them all as soon as possible: dislike or contempt for them may be secretly and constantly fostered, and become the real governing habits. The bodily habits will remain with the body, the mental ones will adhere to the mind, and it is the mind which will govern the body. Or if a mental habit be contracted from the practice of external actions, it may prove to be quite different from that which has been aimed at. For instance, the practice of study may be submitted to from fear or from vanity for many years, and yet no real habit of it be acquired, but the practice be afterwards dropped in an instant without regret or compunction, and nothing remain but the propensity to be governed by fear or vanity. Similar disappointment may ensue even when the motive has been a laudable spirit of obedience. Obedience is a very good habit, but it is not the same habit as that of regulating our actions by our own principles. It is possible for a person to be very submissive, and yet in the absence of authority to have no self-control and no fixed opinions. A taste *may* indeed be acquired for an employment, which at first was practised only from obedience, but this is very uncertain. Reading, music, or anything naturally agreeable, but which at first was enforced as a task, may stimulate the dormant taste for it; but we dare not rely on formal observances for producing the

habit of virtue, we must plant the principle of that in the mind. A creature of mere obedience, whether to an individual or to example and opinion, is the nearest to one of mere feeling, which is the weakest of all, the most unhappy in himself, and if such be the character of a people, they are the least capable of stability. These observations are impliedly directed to the obedience that proceeds from force of some kind. Obedience proceeding from love and respect, very often forms a character of active principle, but that is because the parent or teacher, who has inspired great respect and attachment, has probably done so by a course of treatment calculated to give moral energy. When sufficient care is not taken to inspire this self-discipline, the labours of education will often prove unsuccessful. In proportion as the mind remains passive under the influence of another person, in the same degree will the character be deficient in the moral vigour that fits it to resist evil.

To return from this long digression, and apply the whole theory to the influence of luxury. If we examine the habits of life to which the term may be applied, we may define them compendiously, as a system directed to the special purpose of procuring by every means, the greatest possible passive enjoyment, and practising the least possible active exertion. The tendency of luxury is to give predominance to passive habits, of which the necessary consequence is, to superinduce practical disregard to moral considerations; hence the train is complete through which luxury, (as distinguished from direct

vice,) undermines the moral vigour both of individuals and nations. The lights of progressive knowledge are of no use to one who cannot control his inclinations. The incitement of amiable emotions is lost upon those, who cannot make the exertions required to act upon them. When the habit of self-government is not acquired, the character is left at the mercy of chance, being necessarily driven by impulses received from surrounding circumstances, into vices of a violent or sensual description, as the case may be. Finally, it is of much importance to observe, that this depraving system may thrive disastrously under very low degrees of art and refinement; and also, that under very high ones judicious training may effectively counteract the vicious propensity.

The moral debility produced by luxurious indulgence is, unhappily, too much encouraged by errors of opinion. It is imagined that men who are independent of manual or professional labour, are justifiable for making their inclinations the chief measure of their pursuits. They are brought up in the notion, that as soon as they are their own masters they need do nothing but what they like. They believe, in sincerity of heart, that in abstaining from the breach of the laws of honour and justice, they have fulfilled all the demands that society has upon them. One of the most important ends of education should be to produce a character of decision and energy, and to qualify the pupils for forming and executing purposes of definite utility, suitable to their station and circumstances. This end, some-

times imperfectly conceived from the first, and when otherwise, often ill executed, is not forcibly presented to the minds of the young. Hence they learn to regard the cessation of compulsory duties, as involving a release from self-discipline.

The necessity of regular employment for the young, is indeed generally felt, but the nature of the benefit is not equally understood. Most people, overlooking the self-control, the command of attention, and the pliancy of the faculties, acquired by *mental labour*, believe that it would be a great advantage if the things that are taught, could be put into the head without giving the young the trouble of learning them. Hence all the delusive efforts to teach science in sport; the effect of which, is most commonly to strip science of those incitements to mental activity which its brilliant results, opening successively, afford to the real learner. To him who can connect them with extensive and important laws, they are sources of rational delight. But detached from their causes, or their connexions and applications, and presented to the passive mind of a child to excite his wonder, they produce no other effect than the tricks of a juggler. They do not excite mental activity, but, on the contrary, add to the over-excitement of passive emotions continually poured upon the senses of children, and which contribute to make real learning appear dry.

It is not intended to undervalue the shortening of labour, or discourage attempts to make the lessons agreeable. Economy of labour in education is very valuable, but it is on the presumption that the power

spared, is not afterwards to be wasted. There is a wide difference between the saving, that enables the pupil to advance farther, and that which slackens the active faculties and leaves the mind passive. The more instruction is rendered clear, the more active will it render the mind. For it is only when new ideas are clear, that their relations and applications to other subjects can be perceived. Tracing such relations and applications is the active exertion required. A number of facts and propositions, also, that have no connexion among themselves, or that the child cannot connect with anything he knew before, excite very little mental activity. Learning them is a laborious exertion of attention and memory, but it is the dullest of all labours; and if to this be superadded a sense of confusion, from want of clearly understanding the terms or the propositions themselves, the labour becomes intolerably oppressive. The attention of the child has a constant disposition to wander from the subject and relax effort. If this be suffered, the hours of confinement become long, and the duration of this dull and listless restraint is extremely injurious to the nerves, the faculties, and the temper. It is true that children must be compelled to commit some things to memory, which they cannot well understand. When this is necessary, care should be taken not to impose too much at a time, and to obtain short and vigorous efforts, rather than languid and tedious ones, for in the first case only, is the mind really active. As a general rule for rousing the young to exertion, it is better for the teacher to rely on a cheerful, encouraging, animated

manner in himself, and on the appearance of taking a personal interest in the lesson, rather than on the fallacious endeavour, to give habits of mental industry by the mere stimulus of amusement.

In the education of women, both errors are prevalent. Sometimes their knowledge is crude and shallow, because they are taught little but superficial results; at other times their health and spirits are irreparably hurt, by years of long, dull, and laborious restraint; and in neither case has the mind acquired any vigour. As soon as a certain portion of routine knowledge is instilled, it is assumed the education is complete. The young are then left to the influence of a few conventional rules for restraining their conduct, without any suspicion in their own minds, that they are doing their powers irreparable injury, by neglecting the habit of some useful and systematic employment. They begin life, without knowing the necessity of governing it by fixed principles, rather than by mere taste and humour. Till these erroneous opinions are shaken, it is in vain for persons who lament the progress of luxury, to make a stand at particular forms of expense; for what would be excessive in them, might not be so in another. It will ever be impossible to render the vague notion of excess, practical. But if we can bring our indulgences individually, to the test of their effect upon happiness, examined by the real nature and real interests of mankind, we shall seldom be much at a loss what to restrain. If on the one side some wrong judgments may be passed, owing to inaccurate observation, want of experience, or early prejudice,

on the other side, the subject is not one on which slight deviations from uniform wisdom will signify much. In every practical reform, it is very desirable that everybody if possible should act on the same principle, but the defective applications of it, arising from the errors of different judgments, will not prevent a great deal of good from being effected, and every convert from being useful. The first and most important step towards improvement is the power of acting according to our convictions; and if the process by which luxury destroys such power be understood, we shall not waste our time in declaiming against refinements that are useful, or against superfluities for which we are neither better nor worse. There may be prudential or economical reasons against eating off plate, wearing diamonds, or building palaces and making gardens; it may be a folly to value those things very highly, but the mere possession of them is not weakening the mind. That disastrous effect does not proceed from possessions, but from habits of life; and these may be quite as self-indulgent and more debasing in a slovenly barrack or a country club-room, than in a nobleman's palace.

Section VI.

The Habits of the English examined.

If the destruction of moral energy have been successfully traced to the predominance which luxury gives to passive impressions, there can be no real corrective, but such moral training as exercises the active principles of our nature. Any attempt to

control the excesses of luxury, which is not directed to this purpose, will have little effect. Fortunately this conclusion is the most practical. For it could scarcely be expected that the old should renounce luxuries, which habit had rendered necessary to their health, or interwoven with their pride, their prejudices, or their weakness. But every one is desirous that his children should escape the errors of his own education, and if convinced that he has been the victim of bad habits, moral and physical, he will desire to give them a different training. Though he may have neither the power, nor perhaps even the wish to change his own habits, he may yet feel the importance of bringing up the young, with that power of acting according to the convictions of their reason, which his own education never gave him. A great point will be gained, when people feel that the example of decorum in their own household and conduct, (disgraceful vices being excluded from the present supposition,) gives feeble security for the characters of their children, while the principle of self-control is left uncultivated, and while surrounding circumstances relax moral vigour, by filling life with a succession of passive emotions.

Entirely disclaiming (as already said) the ascetic idea that any indulgence is reprehensible, without some better reason against it than that it is called a luxury by those who cannot afford it, I shall, in this section, apply the tests suggested in a preceding part, to some of our customary indulgences, to try whether they are really conducive to the enjoyment of life or not. No people will defend, perhaps few will

deliberately encourage modes of life, which they admit tend to destroy health, to stupefy the faculties, to pall the sense of enjoyment, to contract the sphere of ideas, to generate selfish, illiberal feelings, and turn pride into its worst and most unsocial direction.

Of all our habitual luxuries, the excesses of the table are perhaps most injurious. Their physical effect is to weaken the nerves, and to dull the faculties. They destroy the keenness and relish for a number of enjoyments, that gladden our passage through life. They are followed by depression of spirits, and create a morbid sensibility to uneasy passions, entailing undefinable sensations of languor, discomfort, and irritability, which are continually calling for momentary relief from other and higher stimulants, and causing increased indolence and effeminacy. The connexion between this state and the grossest selfishness is apparent; a person in this condition shrinks from inconveniences which others do not feel; his own sensations irresistibly absorb his attention. The power of *present* sensation is so great, he cannot submit patiently to a want or a privation; nobody knows the extent of his uneasiness, or the sluggishness of his perceptions towards others.

Great attention to bodily ease produces similar effects, though in a lesser degree. Our physical constitution is such as to be very much formed by our diet and habits of living. Things which at first were pleasures, become by continuance necessaries; the enjoyment they give is scarcely felt, but the pain of wanting them is excessive. For purposes of bodily and mental health, whatever our station, diet can

scarcely be too simple. By simple, is meant such quality and quantity as is rendered agreeable by the keenness of appetite, rather than that for which appetite is excited, solely by the stimulating properties of the food. But in other particulars, our habits of living must be necessarily varied by our station and pursuits. In these, there are more points to consider, than the mere gratification of an animal want. It would not be desirable to limit all our accommodations to what nature requires for bodily health, as in the case of diet; though under all circumstances it is injudicious to allow self-indulgence to provoke wants, that destroy more comfort and happiness than they produce. Many of the most useful and excellent of our moral and mental qualities, require comparative ease and refinement for their development. Experience has shown that literature makes no great progress in a nation, till the possession of ease and comfort withdraws a good many minds, from attending chiefly to animal wants. Refinement of mind, taste, and manners, produces also a higher cast of morals than could be generally cultivated amid the coarse employments, the discomfort, and inconveniences which attend a ruder condition. It is not that refinement of mind and delicacy of feeling are incompatible with homely habits and employments. They may be united by education, but the natural tendency of external circumstances is against it. And when the union occurs, it is one of the most agreeable and beneficial results of the progress of knowledge. One of the means by which such examples are multiplied, and the moral senti-

ments of a nation kept to a high level, is having in the country an accredited and really good standard to refer to. This can be expected, only where there are some classes, whose circumstances favour the development of the purest conceptions of virtue. It would be a great extravagance to prefer the hardy independence of a barbarian to these advantages. But there is a hot-house indulgence, that withers the growth of virtue instead of promoting it. It is desirable that the use of luxuries which really add to convenience, and promote moral refinement, should be extended rather than checked. But the productions and accommodations provided by industry, are so moulded and limited by the habits of life already existing, that individuals can seldom step much beyond others in luxury, without a solicitude about personal comfort, and a sacrifice of time, attention, and money to that object, which it does not deserve. It is this which renders a man selfish and effeminate, even when the things in themselves are not reprehensible. There is little doubt that health and convenience are both promoted by the invention and cheapness of umbrellas. But within the memory of our fathers there were none; and in those days, a man who was too delicate to bear a wetting, must have shrunk from a great part of the duties, and many of the pleasures of life. It was better to brave the inconvenience then; it would be absurd to do so now, when a few shillings will supply an umbrella. In the days of Elizabeth, a nobleman who should have aimed at the same degree of convenience and comfort which are now found in our tradesmen's

apartments, must have made his personal ease a serious pursuit. But those advantages are obtained now without any difficulty, and contribute to decorum and cleanliness as much as to pleasure.

It is certain, however, that the higher the refinement of our age, the more liable are the foremost in luxury to pursue it to extremes, that add nothing real to enjoyment, but weaken and frivolize the character. It is like trying to live in an artificial atmosphere, either we must take colds and rheumatisms every time we step out, or abandon every active pursuit and all social enjoyment, to live closely within. As the wants of the luxurious are innumerable, so also are their risks; and, from the very nature of habit, the suffering of privation far exceeds the pleasure of indulgence. The stomach kept always on the borders of disease by excess is endangered by the slightest impropriety. It loses that hardiness which nature, who intended the animal to live on the productions of every climate, has given it to resist the effects of aliment imperfectly digestible. A dinner at an inn or with a country neighbour is a source of illness, certainly of distaste. The palate, accustomed to the highest refinements of cookery, feels disgust at the fresh and simple aliments, that are most conducive to health and strength. To be an hour too long without food, instead of keenness of appetite, brings sickness and ill temper. What advantage then have the luxurious, over him who is struggling with poverty or constitutional disease? To be faint from hunger, to be often obliged to eat what has no relish or what is unwholesome, are the

hardships of the poor. Oppression, pain, nervous irritability, are the sufferings of dyspepsia, a malady that embitters existence. A constitutional invalid often secures to himself more hours of cheerful enjoyment, by the resolute practice of rigid regimen, than intemperance leaves to a person in full health. Women are not so often intemperate in eating as men, but how common it is to observe them indulging in such excessive attention to bodily ease, that it would require a miracle to keep them without suffering, for a week together! They cannot bear either heat or cold, nor sleep if a ray of light comes through a crevice, or the ticking of a watch can be heard. The breath through a keyhole gives them rheumatism; no clothing can be made light enough, and warm enough to serve them. Very few are able to take a mountain walk, or dispense with continual attendance. These are not the characters of health, and certainly such a condition is not conducive to comfort. When similar debility is brought on by the effects of real malady, we may often hear persons of active and vigorous minds, wishing they could purchase relief from its miseries, by two or three months of acute suffering. But after long self-indulgence has reduced the constitution to this sickly delicacy, it would often be impracticable to change it: the patient might die under the experiment. Therefore, when the infirmity has been brought on, it must be borne through life. In such circumstances, continual solicitude about personal accommodation becomes unavoidable, and the sphere within which ease and enjoyment can be felt is pro-

portionally contracted. As the sources of discomfort are multiplied by morbid sensibility, the chances of their being all avoided at the same time are decreased. I do not believe there is the slightest exaggeration in saying, that a sense of discomfort is the habitual condition of the intemperate and luxurious, and that it begins to predominate even before the prime of life is past. It is interrupted by pleasurable excitements, at least till habit has blunted the poignancy even of those; but uneasy sensations and mental irritability return when the excitements are over, as the waters close where the oar has passed.

The nature of man, on the contrary, is, that happiness should be his usual condition. This joy of existence is the natural consequence of life and health. It is interrupted by the common calamities and violent passions which belong to mortality, but as soon as they have passed, (and they are all transitory,) the sense of enjoyment returns, and animates every employment of our active faculties. In real health of body and mind, we pass directly from positive pain to positive pleasure, and as the calamities of life, which are so severe as to destroy all power of withdrawing our thoughts from the subject of them, are not of frequent occurrence, it is clear that no indulgence which luxury can yield, is a compensation for the loss of that buoyancy of mind. This would hold good, though we could secure the victim of self-indulgence from all other sorrows, but those which he brought on himself. But we know that no such absolute contrast as that, can exist between the fate of the luxurious and that of other

persons. There is no mark on the door-posts of the wealthy, that shall make the angel of death pass them by, when the pestilence is sweeping off the first-born of the land. They are as often stung by neglect, and wounded by the false, the unkind, and the ungrateful, as the rest of the world; but they are without the internal spring that brings the mind back to enjoyment.

It is therefore certain, that a system of great bodily indulgence abstracts from the happiness of life. It destroys more pleasures than it can supply; it produces disease and depression of spirits; and it contracts the range of ideas and perceptions by the dullness which it gives to the faculties, and the indifference and languor it produces. This poverty of ideas, this coldness of imagination and feeling, these irritable nerves and languid spirits, lead to further indolence, and indolence is the parent of disordered affairs and neglected duties, which entail a succession of cares, and difficulties, and fears, and disgraces. Wealth may offer temptations to pursuits and passions, in many ways adverse to individual and social happiness, but the habits in question superadd, to the difficulty of changing false tastes and feelings, the physical impediment of a depraved constitution. When people have long indulged in the habit of consulting bodily ease on every occasion, the power of present sensation becomes irresistible. When the convictions of the judgment can no longer prevail against the desire of the moment, the way is laid open to any form of depravity external circumstances may present. It is then that the events of

sions, with the least possible exertion of active power. The effect of excessive indulgence of passive emotions, in wearing out sensibility to enjoyment itself, seems to be thoroughly proved by the theory of Butler; and we may safely appeal to the actual condition of society as an illustration of the truth. Are not they, who are devoted to the great world, complaining incessantly of ennui, and of the sameness and dullness of everything? Are they not victims of apathy and disappointment? Is that a happy condition? Let not the young, to whom the great world is yet a scene of enchantment, imagine they owe their enjoyment to its habits and indulgences. They owe it to nature. Whatever delights them, acts through some natural passion; they are excited by novelty, vanity, gaiety, love, ambition, by sympathy with others, by the mere interchange of ideas, or the acquisition of knowledge; some spring of this sort must be touched to produce any excitement. The mistake consists in supposing there is more to be met with in high life than elsewhere. The very fact contended for is, that luxury tends to destroy the sources of those enjoyments, as of every other. There is more of every natural and agreeable excitement, and assuredly greater frequency of strong affection to be found among those, whose minds are chastised by active exertion and their feelings not debased by self-indulgence, than is often to be met with in the great world. Vanity and ambition are not always censurable; no one is without some vanity, or ought to be without some ambition; and those passions are less dangerous in a society, where

it is not the tone to give exaggerated importance to trifles, and to sanction the sacrifice of principle for money or rank.

A cultivated judgment and active imagination are sources of continual enjoyment; but the pleasures of thought are unknown to the enervated, and life is not so happy as to afford such a loss. Leisure and retirement, which by the cultivated are filled with agreeable and animating employments, to others bring nothing but monotony. Even fortune, which levels with one undistinguishing sweep, the hopes of the wise and the foolish, the projects of the benevolent, and the schemes of the selfish, finds the active and instructed spirit, not unprovided with a resource against bitter ruminations.

Whatever leads to stagnation is directly at variance with the ends of existence. It is akin to annihilation. Nature seems to have designed this world rather to develop our susceptibilities of happiness and virtue, than to secure the fruition of either. The desire of happiness seems to be made use of, chiefly to incite us to action and call forth our latent powers; for contentment is seldom attained. It seems as though Providence saw it was fitter we should suffer many and great evils, than not have our capacities of feeling and thinking called forth. It is certain we live and die, very imperfectly developed in this world; it is one of the natural presumptions for another; but still the rudest creature has a great many faculties and affections unfolded in him, and even suffering itself seems to increase the power of reflection, and the susceptibility of happiness. The

most finely-constructed creatures have the greatest sensibility both to pain and pleasure. And though our sufferings are assuredly increased more than our pleasures, by acute feelings, yet it is also certain our minds are so constituted, as to prefer the greater sensibility notwithstanding its pains. We may desire to control and regulate its excesses, and to divert it from things that are unworthy of serious attention, but we cannot bring ourselves to approve insensibility. In like manner our attainment in virtue (which implies action and effort) is ever far short of our feeling. Among its generous disciples, how few are they who fulfil their own aspirations! But their love and desire for it, go beyond their success. Of those who are burning with desire to serve their fellow-creatures, and whose souls are disciplined to let no temptation of fame, or pleasure, or profit divert them one moment from the interests of mankind, how many are cast aside where their virtue has no field for exercise, except in the magnanimity, with which their benevolence resists the trial of neglect and indifference! Thus it is that habits of virtue may be wrought into the mind, even while their effects are not very conspicuous. We see only the little they have accomplished; what the mental efforts within may have been, we never know. Finally, nothing appears more entirely opposed to the purposes of our existence, than habits of life which relax self-discipline, pall the very power of enjoyment, and check the increase of ideas in that special condition of society, which most requires their cultivation.

There is a very marked difference between the excesses described and those of mere style and show. It has been proved that the former are destructive to the physical and mental powers; the latter do not seem to produce such effects, but are chiefly the gratifications of vanity or fancy. To a luxurious liver, the practice of temperance and hardiness may have become so painful as to be nearly impossible, or it may be too late to recover the enfeebled energies of body and mind. But the pomp and parade of a palace, gorgeous attire, furniture, and equipage, and trains of useless attendants, create no physical habits that make the return to simplicity difficult. Those superfluities, in fact, are adopted less for personal pleasure than to impose upon others. When there is nobody to look at them, their possessors are often glad to discard them as an incumbrance. When forced to forego them by some reverse of fortune, if they look with pain on homely furniture and few attendants, it is because they view them as symptoms of lost consideration. It is not their comfort, but their pride that is wounded. But that is perhaps one of our strongest passions, and it is certain that people will often prefer a good deal of physical discomfort in private, rather than forego the appearance which enables them to vie with their superiors. A luxurious table is indeed often kept up for no other reason; and is then to be classed with the indulgence of pride and display, rather than with that of sensuality. But it may happen to generate the evils of both. The general passion for sumptuous living and splendid establishments,

has the effect of affixing social estimation chiefly to the command of luxuries, and thereby (as observed in the quotation from Murray*) obliterating the distinctions of merit and worth. Rivalry in profusion thus spreads extensively, introducing an almost universal practice among the upper classes of living beyond their incomes, and converting all those who do so into rapacious spendthrifts. There is, perhaps, no country in Europe where this corruption is carried to greater excess. In every rank, command of society depends principally upon the means of ministering to the gratifications of luxury; those means, therefore, must be acquired at any cost, and accordingly there are few things so servile or so dishonest, that will not be practised to attain them. There are many persons who, in their hearts, care little for expense, but to lose caste would be a serious evil; hence the inducement to peculation, to bartering principle for profit, and to defrauding creditors. These crimes and disgraces are incurred to avoid the neglect, the desertion, nay, almost the contempt, that attends want of wealth. The temptations to meanness are great, and are not resisted. In the great world, the hand of fellowship, which is rarely granted even to the most accomplished who want the means of forcing consideration, is easily yielded to the prostrate and the cunning. Visits and invitations are humbly craved and accepted on any terms, insults are suffered and slights forgiven, quite incredible to those who have lived in a wider circle, where the struggle for admittance being less such

* See page 32.

bitter humiliations are not necessary. That exclusive spirit which excites so much spleen, results very much from the nature of our institutions. It is in a manner necessary to the existence of a society that aims at pre-eminence, and yet cannot maintain itself by any specific distinctions. In countries where blood makes the difference between noble and plebeian, a defined and impassable barrier preserves the dignity of the former from encroachment; it is compromised by no courtesy he can practise towards others. The tendency of this is to introduce more amenity and kindness into the intercourse of society between individuals, though it generates a more hostile separation of interests between the classes. That the political and social consequences of the latter are worst, has been shown by experience. The lofty spirit supposed to be transmitted by noble blood, is not remarkable in the nobility of those countries, where marriages with inferiors are most jealously prevented. The distinctions of merit and worth are even more obliterated, by the exclusive reservation of honours and privileges to high birth, than by the undeserved influence frequently obtained by mere wealth. For the desire of wealth at least stimulates enterprise, but the privileges granted to nobility, seem to have done little more than direct pride into one channel instead of another, leaving the spirit, in both directions, equally anti-social. Nevertheless, individually, there is something more generous and high-minded in the respect paid to birth clothed in poverty, than in the obsequious and sordid adulation of wealth which prevails in England.

The progress of civilization in England is continually tending to lessen distinctions, which the spirit of luxury is desperately struggling to increase, and good feeling and happiness are stifled in the contest. The constitution acknowledges no distinction but peer and commoner. The families of the aristocracy, including their titled sons, rank but as commoners,—a decree which the aristocratic *spirit* rejects with disdain. Even the peer himself is somewhat brought down by the maxim, that all English gentlemen are equals; and who shall define what makes an English gentleman? New creations for political and electioneering jobs are bringing in continual accessions of new pretenders. The owners of land, the holders of wealth acquired in trade or otherwise, have all the same right to class with the first society, and the same chance of exclusion. Party politics and intermarriages of interest and vanity, contribute still more to obliterate every definable line between the high and low, the refined and the vulgar. They are all blended together, except so far as the leaders in station and influence are able to maintain an arbitrary code, that excludes whom they will from their own hallowed precincts; and as no definite rule for exclusion can be given, it must be effected by being cold, repulsive, and difficult of access. This is almost inevitable, where there are such numbers of heterogeneous pretenders. It is certain that in social intercourse there must be selection; men are not to herd together like animals merely because they are of the same species, but to associate according to the principles that help to unfold their

various moral and mental capacities. Nothing would tend more completely to obliterate the distinctions of merit and worth, and to impede their action, than to throw people together who had no sympathies in their tastes, understandings, pursuits, and manners. It would be an intolerable tyranny, if our acquaintance or intimacy were open to the encroachment of every intruder. If a man's house may not be entered against his will, still less may his intimacy be forced. Even among persons of equal merit there are such things as incompatible virtues, which render it impossible for their possessors to be useful or agreeable to each other. It is the property of high civilization to work up the simple elements which compose human nature, into innumerable varieties of character, as little intelligible to each other, as they are who speak different languages sprung from a common root: it requires philosophical research to trace their original identity.

There must be a good deal of agreement in pursuit and moral sentiment between parties, before they can be a source of much pleasure or much advantage to each other; and where the diversity is very great, (especially where it results from habits that are the proprieties of station in one case, and out of character in the other,) personal *intimacy* is very often corrupting to both. In fact, as in very dissimilar circumstances there are many points, on which there neither is nor ought to be suitability of habits and sentiments, the bond, that in some cases draws people into social intimacies with their inferiors, is on both sides some selfish purpose in disguise:

one party gains the service and flattery of a convenient tool, and the other pays himself for his restraint, by making some profit of his patron. The corruptions of manners and taste, that are commonly observed in these unnatural unions, are therefore easily accounted for. Every one is much worse for the assumption of tastes and sentiments, which, if they were real, would only make him unfit for the place that he holds in society. Whenever the manners, tastes, and sentiments appropriate to one station, are such as could not, without great unsuitableness, be transferred to another, the two classes ought not to blend into one common society: in all such cases, there must be a superior and an inferior, and familiar intercourse would lead, on the one side, to base affectations, which, on the other, would be repaid by scorn. Our tenderest connexions, our friendships, our enjoyment of life, being all dependent on those with whom we live, it is very important to our happiness, that our society should be so formed as to bring those together, who can really associate with advantage and pleasure. We are therefore led to inquire, whether the luxury that makes wealth so indispensable really effects this purpose, or is not rather among the worst principles of selection, by which people can be drawn together; and whether it does not lead to habits very unfriendly to the enjoyment and uses of society?

It can scarcely be supposed where ambition and vanity, luxury and indolence reign paramount, (as they always will over the majority of those who are released from all necessity of exertion,) that

public utility, or private worth should constitute the terms of admission to society. Such other qualifications as station and idleness can command, without the trouble of virtue or the sacrifices of generosity, will naturally be preferred. These will be wealth, or subserviency, accompanied by the adoption of manners and habits peculiar to their circle,—graceful and agreeable to each other, stiff and repulsive to every one else. But even an ill-bred and daring tone towards every one will pass current, provided it bear the peculiar stamp of their own mint, so as to be easily distinguished. The first society therefore, when resolved into its elements, will be found to consist of the principal nobility and their immediate families, the leaders as of course, and of a selection from the aristocracy and gentry, who, sometimes by connexions, sometimes by wealth or political influence, and sometimes without any of the three, but by accidental opportunities or arts of intrigue, have forced or thawed their way through the triple ice. Such are mostly the terms of the patents for admission, and such they will remain, while the mind is rendered both mercenary and servile by the extravagant value which luxury attaches to trifles. The cultivation of real refinement, that is, of a feeling for the true, and the beautiful, and the elevated, wherever existing, grafted on an earnest and vigorous character, would not render the higher order less select in their society than they now are, but it would lead them to select it on better principles.

Is it any wonder, when anything great or generous

is seldom presented to wake the natural sentiments of the human heart, that worth and ability should be scarcely understood, and that such a base adulation of wealth and rank should take hold of the mind, as, when found among the vulgar, we term purse-proud and servile? For, notwithstanding the scorn with which the high-born apply those epithets to the unvarnished upstart, it is only in manner, that there is any difference in this respect between the vulgar and the polished. While society is so constituted as to attach mortification to the want of luxuries, and such importance to the possession of them, that the wealthy and persons of moderate fortune (whatever their merit) cannot associate on terms of equality, pride of purse and meanness of sentiment must prevail very widely. It requires rather an unusual concurrence of circumstances, to admit of terms of intimacy between persons whose establishments are very different, however great the agreement between their tastes, education, and sentiments may be.

The importance attached to a title is often ludicrous. Events that are shaking all Europe will scarcely be thought of or listened to, while the competition for a new title remains undecided. Yet the importance of the new peer is often confined to his own circle. To all who know not the secret springs of political life, the strange distribution of honour is quite unintelligible. The moderate faculties, which in a private station integrity and kindness would have rendered respectable, when held up to the gaze of the public by a title, become notorious insignificance. The title, like a significant figure at the wrong side

of a cipher, loses its hold of the mind, and the cipher remains with its emptiness. Can it be for such a trivial decoration as this, that the independent self-existence of an English gentleman is compromised, and such paltry actions perpetrated in public life!

Ill as the language and manners of the great world are imitated, in the gossiping novels and satires which have been so numerous, yet the defects themselves are well represented, and the meanness described is not overstated. The acts it leads to are in substance very much what really occur, and only differ from the same vices in the lower orders, by the local colouring of the place. The artful, equivocating, petty means by which servility gains its hard-earned morsel, "and the cold drops which flattery thaws from pride," are the same in essence, whether on the part of the lady's maid, or the lady herself.

It may be pleaded, that there never was a time or place, where wealth and rank did not receive a certain degree of interested adulation; and this may be granted. But if that degree be in this country so great, that neither family, talents, refined manners, nor worth can secure their possessors from neglect and mortification, if they are without wealth; if titles are sought for with incomprehensible avidity; if the acquisition of rank is so generally attended by a tone of conceit and insolence, as to render the contrary a subject of honourable remark, then, let it not be pretended, that pride of purse and servile adulation of rank, are not characteristics of the highest English society.

Real honour and real power must ever be deservedly objects of desire. No social advantage is either so gratifying in itself, or so capable of being made useful to others, as distinction in the eyes of our fellow-creatures. It is the standing place whence the lever of talent may be used with most effect. Given as the badge of public services or professional merit, a title has an efficient lustre. It denotes the inherent superiority of the individual: it does not cause, it discloses his importance to society. As the mark of authority too, high rank, though recently given, has a natural influence over the minds of the many. It may be less easy to justify the respect which even philosophical tempers assign to ancient nobility. Why is it that mere antiquity is allowed to dignify a title? Supposing it to have been originally conferred as a mark of merit, why is it held to confer honour on those who did not exist when it was earned? It is, however, graven in our nature that parents should leave the inheritance of their glory to their descendants. In rude ages and in polished, the son of the warrior and the patriot has been invested with a natural nobility by the universal voice of mankind. Even they who were emblazoning their own names and surpassing their fathers, the Achilles and the Diomedes, were still held ennobled as the son of Peleus and the son of Tydeus. If the descendants of those who have served their country are left in poverty and neglect, we regard it not only as a misfortune but as a wrong. It is considered a stain upon the country that suffers it. Nor is this perhaps the only source

to which we might trace the honour attached to old nobility, and which no king or minister can convey with his patent to the new. One might almost believe that a glimmering of that sense of immortality which is seated in our souls, causes us to be vividly affected by everything that realizes to our imaginations, the beings that are not, whether their existence is gone by or yet to come. The very stones, laid by the hands that are now no more, are touched with reverence. In proportion as length of gone-by ages casts obscurity and its doubts over beings who once lived, each vestige of their existence becomes more interesting to the imagination, and endears them as individuals to the heart. We clothe them with a grandeur and magnificence, perhaps they never had. Their countenance and deportment have a dignity, we will not admit to be in the present race. The halls they sat in, and the pavement they trod on become sacred; and when in any degree we can connect them with ourselves, our family, or our country, even our own pride makes us glory in giving splendour to their descendants. The hand that gives the title, has no power to give this spell to the creature of the day. It may be but imaginary after all. It may be, that some serious and deep thinkers have cast off these illusory claims on their respect. But if they are natural, they will never be extensively obliterated, and while they last, they will be an object of reverence to wise men as well as to weak. But when hordes of peers, too numerous to be either dignified or remembered, have dissevered all connexion with that merit which alone

can bring respect to new creations, what can a title illustrate but the puerility of the mind that seeks it?

It would be but a feeble objection to the justice of these observations, that the struggles for fashion, which are supposed to give such intensity to frivolous and ungenerous passions, cannot affect persons whose position is secure without effort. In the first place, the spirit of rivalry and the struggle for distinction, prevail among many who might be supposed above their influence; for though rank and wealth may have placed them in a station where they have no superiors, yet rivalry among equals never ceases from any cause, but the sobriety of mind that disdains it; nor has experience ever shown that our jealousies are less vehement, from being directed against individuals rather than classes. Secondly, though it be admitted that the influence of the great world is worst, upon those who have to sacrifice their whole souls for its patronage, yet many other causes remain to pervert the minds of those also who are "born to greatness." Luxury has thrown them into a world of wants and interests, different from the rest of mankind. They live in a region of false opinions from which few escape.

But indiscriminate censure is not the purpose of these observations. They are characters of no ordinary vigour, that rise like the palm-tree in the desert, from a soil where every plant of common nature is parched. It is to such I should desire to appeal for the truth of these censures. For the hearts that are too warm, and the heads that are too

thoughtful to yield to the influence that surrounds them, imbibe a feeling of its emptiness and a hatred of its unworthiness peculiarly strong, and not unfrequently mournful. In no other society is there so little cheerfulness as in the world of fashion and frivolity. Where business and serious occupations exist, they prepare the spirits for the subsequent excitements of society; but amusement is the business of the idle and dissipated; its interests are made solemn and important, and the most serious passions are wasted upon them. The assembly-room or dinner-table is the very focus of care and anxiety, so that a funereal dulness often overhangs it, and there, where there is the greatest amount of money, time, and contrivance expended on pleasure, —there is least animation of spirits. For one who is pleased, a dozen are chewing the cud of some petty annoyance, and the flow of spirits excited and animated by rapid interchange of ideas is scarcely known. When it occurs, it is seldom owing to those who live for dissipation, but to men whom the duties of office compel to work very hard. Notwithstanding their wealth, the pursuits of ambition compel them to become men of business, and the elasticity of their minds is preserved. That languid and depressed condition which cankers the very heart of social enjoyment, loses its solemn character on occasions of disappointment and vexation. Its pleasures are not cheerful, but its distresses are ludicrous, and are felt to be so. Each laughs at his neighbour's mortifications, and the consciousness he is supplying the same malicious

amusement in his turn, does not take the sting from his own griefs when they arise.

Nor is it merely as destructive of social enjoyment, that the habits of the great world are unfriendly to happiness. It is not the place for those who have warm imaginations and tender hearts. There is scarcely any circumstance in which that sphere differs more from others, than in the deficiency of strong affections. The chances are many against their existence; and if a woman be born to move in the haunts of the worldly, it were almost cruel to snatch her from that immersion in their follies, which may serve to stifle the pangs of disappointed affection. For after all that can be said of the misery of its empty pursuits and corrupted tastes, the disappointments that end its petty passions, and the mortifications that cling to its apparent splendours, sorrows like those bear no comparison with tears of anguish, shed by the grave of love. Surrounding pleasures, even the tranquil and elevating beauty of external nature, seem but a mockery when offered in place of the one thing needful,—perfect and overflowing affection. The exterior decorum and attention on the part of an altered husband, which betrays to the world no dereliction of morals but what its easy code passes over as a right, is no substitute for love. Not unfrequently there is something almost appalling in the sense of solitude, which on occasions of sickness or retirement oppresses a young woman, who to all appearance is overwhelmed with attendance. The hand is not there that would render every other superfluous. A voice is wanting, whose

absence leaves the silence and horror of death. The eyes are missed, whose glances first called forth the fervour of her affections from their peaceful sleep; or if looking on her for a moment, they express nothing but indifference. These are the occasions that dispel the laboured illusion, wherewith under the garb of business, or cares, or natural manner, she had sought to disguise from herself the marks of an estranged heart. In these sad and desolate hours, her memory retraces her early years, her mother's tender watchfulness, and the soft voices of sisters contending for their place by her bedside. The contrast with her present stately solitude bursts resistless through every effort to repel it; and life and youth, with their long futurity, present her with nothing but a frightful chasm.

Alas! alas! my song is sad,
  How should it not be so,
When he, who used to make me glad,
  Now leaves me in my woe?
With him my love, my graciousness,
  My beauty, all are vain;
I feel as if some guiltiness
  Had marked me with its stain.
One sweet thought still has pow'er o'er me,
  In this my heart's great need;
'Tis, that I ne'er was false to thee,
  Dear friend, in word or deed:
I own that nobler virtues fill
  Thy heart, love only mine;
Yet why are all thy looks so chill
  Till they on others shine?
Oh! long-loved friend, I marvel much
  Thy heart is so severe,
That it will yield not to the touch
  Of love and sorrow's tear.

No, no! it cannot be, that thou
  Should seek another's love.
Oh! think upon our early vow,
  And thou wilt faithful prove.

Thy virtues—pride, thy lofty fame,
  Assure me thou art true,
Though fairer ones than I may claim
  Thy hand, and deign to sue.
But think, beloved one, that, to bless
  With perfect blessing, thou
Must seek for trusting tenderness:
  Remember then our vow!

COUNTESS DE DIE *to Rambaud d'Orange.*

SECTION VII.

Effects of the Corruptions of Luxury in Different Classes.

The inquiry into the effects of luxury on the human character, has unavoidably conveyed the strongest censures on those who are most exposed to its influence, namely, the highest class. But this has not been done in the spirit of those, who seek to discredit all who are more elevated than themselves. In showing forth the effects of any habits, it is expedient to seek for them where they are most strongly pronounced. The worst and most numerous victims of luxury and frivolity, must of necessity be found among those who have the greatest means at command, and whose personal consideration is most independent of their own exertion or merit. The most successful system of education could not be expected to secure every individual from the influ-

ence of habitual temptations, whatever their nature; and the seductions of luxury will be less combated, than things that present themselves at once to the mind in the shape of positive vice, and about which (if people mean to be conscientious), there can be no hesitation. In any large class, the number of persons too weak to act from their principles, or even to feel conviction, in its true sense, will usually be considerable; and in the aristocracy, the possession of wealth, territory, and political power prevents such persons from being insignificant. Indeed, whenever amusement and fashion are made very important, the more frivolous part of society will probably take the greatest lead, and give it their character, for the same reason that women do so more than men. Their thoughts being more eagerly and continually directed to trifles of that nature, they are really better judges of them, and manage them better than persons whose minds are taken up with graver interests.

That incapacity of steady conviction above alluded to, is far from being always a mark of natural inferiority; it is one of the many evils produced by luxurious habits. Conviction means the belief that comes from our judgment; it implies that the proposition in question has been examined by some test of truth, previously established in the mind, and that the absolute dependence of the one upon the other is perceived. Even in matters which a reflecting mind takes upon trust, the same process takes place; for the test of truth with which the proposition is compared, is the known credibility of

the informant. But this careful attention and comparison are acts of some labour, such as a lazy mind does not perform; and when they are not performed, no force of argument produces any real conviction. It may make some temporary impression upon the mind, but it is not correct to call every such impression a conviction; sometimes it is a mere association of ideas, such as may be produced by frequent repetition, or even by accident. Horror and darkness are sometimes very strongly associated in the mind of a child, but it is not accurate to say the child is *convinced* there is danger in the dark; he may even be convinced of the contrary, and yet not cease to shake at his own imaginations. Of the same nature are the trust people place, without examination, in a newspaper puff, and the associations they assume to exist between certain opinions and disloyalty or irreligion, without the possibility of tracing any connexion between the two. Such accidental associations lead to prejudice; convictions lead to knowledge. Of course there may be a mistake made even in these; we may come to a false conclusion; but as soon as the error is detected, the false opinion is rectified. On the contrary, a prejudice in an unreasoning mind, is not at all shaken by demonstrating its absurdity. A train of argument, however demonstrative, addressed to the unreasoning, can do nothing more than produce a train of passive impressions, which, however agreeably entertained in the morning, may be erased in the evening by succeeding impressions, proceeding from their customary life and society. We turn, therefore, from persons of this

sort, not as incorrigibly wicked, but as hopelessly inert,—

Matter too soft, a lasting mark to bear.

In this point of view the exclusive disposition is unfortunate, which prevents our nobility from mingling, on friendly and familiar terms, with society of a more vigorous character, and in which there is more knowledge, and a more extended view of moral duties. By this wider acquaintance with human nature, they would learn to feel for its general interests rather than for those of a class. They who have personally known many men of disinterested virtue, will believe in their existence, and look for such. But there are few surer ways to corrupt public virtue, than for the rulers of a nation to disbelieve its reality; for they will neither love a phantom themselves, nor seek phantoms to fill public offices.

An extensive acquaintance, or a wide sphere of action, is usually adduced as one of the advantages of an introduction to the great world. But constituted as that is, its opinions swayed by the most enervated part of the community, it only rivets the same set of narrow prejudices; where all profess the same opinions, and follow the same maxims, the wider the circle, the more invincible the prejudices become. No opportunity occurs for contrasting the true with the false, the useful with the frivolous. Characters of some strength may resist the contagion of example, if they have before their eyes one respected model to represent the truth, and give them confidence that its apparent brightness is not the illusion of their own

enthusiasm; but few can long resist an influence that is universal. Knowledge of the world and of human nature is not acquired, by living with a thousand puppets all moved by the same strings. It is acquired by acquaintance with persons of different stations, different pursuits and professions, different education, and of different parts of the country or of the world. We should know the retired and the worldly, the depressed and the prosperous; we should attend to their views and their sentiments, as they have expressed them in their writings, or disclose them in their conversation and conduct. By such experience, we may really learn to judge how circumstances will act upon men, and to correct that strange blindness, and ignorance of the things that are going on in the world, which is usually remarkable in persons of high station, and which would often be ludicrous, if their influence over legislation did not make it terrible.

In every other station, business mingles more with the pursuits of pleasure. Persons who are not so far out of reach of the common difficulties of life, cannot be equally sophisticated. If they do not seek for realities, realities seek for them. There must be attention to business, there must be intermissions of worldliness. Contact with persons of different classes and pursuits is unavoidable, and the continuity of one set of prejudices is thereby interrupted. These circumstances are favourable to the formation of the mind. In circles where people have neither great rank to rest upon themselves, or to flatter in others, personal worth makes a greater impression. Opinion

being less overawed by authority, people are not in equal danger of losing their station, by opposing the prejudices of the leaders of society, but can more easily listen to the voice of reason. It is therefore in such social conditions, that it is most reasonable to look for persons, on whose minds an argument against the corruptions of luxury may have some practical influence. It is from the middle classes that every essential improvement must proceed: but by that term I would be understood to mean, not the mercantile bodies exclusively, but every class except the highest and the lowest. By the highest, is meant those who are raised too much above others, to have many interests in common with the rest of society; by the lowest, all whom the necessity of constant labour precludes from liberal knowledge. The first, as has been shown, have too little motive to take an active part in reforming their own habits. The poor and ignorant have evidently little to do with the present question. A term is required that will include all those who are free from the disadvantages of both extremes, many of whom are professional, some are small landed proprietors, and others are living in independence. The use of the term Middle Classes in this extended sense may not indeed be quite usual. A gentleman of moderate fortune, associating perhaps with persons in the highest stations, possibly connected with them, might not choose to be placed in the middle class; but there is no other expression, that will include those innumerable shades and degrees of the higher orders, whose station is not made definite and indefeasible

by the possession of positive rank, wealth, or power. Placed, by their command of education, within reach of the highest intellectual and moral refinement, more out of the influence of corruption than the highest in rank and fortune, and a great deal more numerous than the fashionable few, it is their minds that it is desirable to convince, and their influence that will have the greatest effects on the country.

The first step in the attempt must be to show that the highest circle, the great world as it is called, is necessarily more corrupted than others. This fact is sometimes disputed; especially by women whose immediate intercourse being with the correct and moral in that circle, see very little of what is going on around them, except that there is a good deal of frivolity, of weakness, and prejudice, to be met with in it. But their own education has not been of a nature to teach them, that it may be a *national* evil if those qualities are the character of a great and powerful class. Lord Chesterfield takes the same side: he desires us to show him the cottage where the same vices as those in a court do not prevail, except that here, their deformity is disguised by good-breeding, and there, left to the native expression of its grossness. This may be true, but it is not what Lord Chesterfield meant it should be, a defence of the court. That the highest society in the country is not more depraved than those who are utterly ignorant, tempted by distress, and left to the suggestions of untutored grossness of feeling, is a very small argument in their favour; and it is a

very questionable advantage, that their vices are made palatable by exterior refinements. Lord Chesterfield does not seek for parallel vices in the homes of the middle classes, the point between ignorance and luxury. It is unfortunately but too true that, except as to manner, the vices of the highest and the lowest classes have a close resemblance; and the state of mind in both, in the one from their power, in the other from their numbers, opposes the greatest obstacle to the progress of real civilization.

In a country possessing immense wealth and a numerous aristocracy, that very condition of society would inevitably cast up a certain number of individuals corrupted and enfeebled by luxury. It could not be expected in any station, that everybody should resist the temptations to which they were especially exposed, or that even the majority should do so uniformly. It might therefore be pleaded, that if the luxury of the great world is to produce such effects as are attributed to it, it is rather desirable it should be difficult to enter it,—that except for this exclusive disposition, the follies and vices of high life would spread with still greater rapidity than they do,—that considered in this point of view, if it could be confined to the highest circles, it would be rather useful than otherwise,—and that its satirists have usually been persons burning with resentment at their own wrongs, and who attach an importance to a personal offence which it does not deserve. But we must not permit ourselves to justify an ungenerous feeling, that spreads its disastrous influence through so many relations of society. There are

better ways of restraining the infection of folly and vice, than by encouraging a hostile spirit between the classes. The petty injustice and mortifications the exclusive spirit inflicts on individuals, might be a small evil if it could be confined to that, for there is no doubt that many women have been driven by their personal mortifications, to seek their happiness in better and more useful pursuits, in a sphere where they could obtain the pleasures of society, without the sacrifice of their independence. But there is no method of confining the operation of a bad feeling to the single points on which it does accidental good; and unhappily the *spirit* cannot be confined to the fashionable world. It is rather that it cannot be acted upon with equal constancy in other circles, than that the disposition does not exist; for wherever we go, in the towns and country parts of England, it is common to find one part of society shunning the other, or employed in galling and mortifying them. In addition to the rivalries generated by the interests which occupy frivolous minds, there is this anti-social, ungenerous disposition to keep aloof from somebody, who has never offended, merely to make them feel that they are held to be inferior. It is not to be believed how much the growth of beneficent political sentiments is counteracted, by the paltry prejudices and interests created by this temper of mind. It is directly hostile to the benevolent principle. The higher we go in English society, the wider the circle that is excluded from the range of sympathy. A real or affected ignorance of the ordinary affairs of life and

of the persons in the neighbourhood, becomes a mark of refinement, which, though only intended to impress the bystanders with a conviction of the pretender's superiority, quickly degenerates into a practical indifference to the interests and feelings of others. Benevolence, cramped in the heart, takes refuge in the imagination, where it relents at the sufferings of mankind, but detests their rights; it will bestow alms, but not confer independence. This spirit, alien to the diffusion of human happiness and the progress of society in knowledge and manners, constitutes the true evil of the exclusive disposition; and it is not a sufficient apology for those who indulge it, that they distribute a great deal of soup to the poor.

It is owing to the greater intensity of the exclusive spirit in the great world, that vanity, dissipation, and the rage for pleasure, are so much more corrupting there, than in any other society. Rivalry in the frivolous distinctions and pursuits of luxury, requires in no other circle that utter sacrifice of time, thought, and money, which converts follies into vices. The difficulty of entering the ranks of fashion, and when there, of maintaining one's place on its slippery surface, requires the devotion of mind, heart, and soul. No invitation must be refused, no visit neglected, no slight resented; no taste must be acknowledged, no opinion avowed, no friendship or connexion maintained, that are the least out of favour with its despotic rulers. The candidate for admission, who is slowly creeping on in spite of discouragement and mortification, if daring to accept

the acquaintance of some one who is reckoned vulgar, is directly lost. During these years of toil and fear, neither time nor money must be spared when the prospect of gaining a step appears; and when gained, no dancer on the slack-rope is so insecure.

> Full little knowest thou, that hast not tride,
> What hell it is, in suing long to bide:
> To loose good dayes, that might be better spent;
> To wast long nights in pensive discontent;
> To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
> To feed on hope, to pine with feare and sorrow;
> * * * *
> To fret thy soule with crosses and with cares;
> To eate thy heart through comfortless dispaires;
> To fawne, to crowche, to waite, to ride, to ronne,
> To spend, to give, to want, to be undonne*.

To men, some greater latitude must be allowed than to women, before they are rejected. They have oftener some property which renders them useful as a speculation, in some way or other: they may have electioneering interests to account (without loss of character) for their being seen with an obscure companion; finally it is less known where they are, or with whom associating. Yet all is insufficient to preserve a free spirit, or the dignity that proceeds from security. We find them wasting their money, devoting their time and their thoughts to their dress and establishment, nay, forsaking their principles, and turning their back upon friends and benefactors, as if a glance would convert them to a pillar of salt, and the utmost result is,—to be tolerated rather than received. From women the pursuit requires the total absorption of all their faculties and all their means,

* SPENSER.

for a purpose the most frivolous. It entails a false valuation of everything connected with it; a contempt and disgust for everything which does not bear the stamp of fashion. Let the reader reflect how much worse are these influences on persons who are forcing their way into society, than on such as, being by rank and connexions in their natural place, have no struggle for admission. But even they whose birth and connexions draw them naturally into the sphere with the highest, if they have little wealth, can scarcely maintain their position long, without constant pains-taking, in which it is very hard to keep clear of servility. However brilliant the society in which they live may appear to those who view it from a lower stage, their condition is accompanied with a constant sense of insecurity, in which mortification predominates. Even among those, who have such houses and establishments as might enable them to appear with some splendour, the struggle does not cease. Competitors are so numerous, that whoever relaxes exertion is in danger of being crushed. There are so many with whom the race is equal, that the slightest accident may jostle one out of the course. It is hard to find an evening in which there are not two or three assemblies given by persons with whom it would be vain to compete. If the beginner miscalculate her opportunity, she is beaten. If on two or three occasions her house has been deserted for that of some rival, the priority of the latter is established. If on entering her rooms, the faces of certain distinguished persons are missing, who are always looked for as the stamp of fashion, her fate is

sealed. Henceforward her assemblies are declared vulgar, and it becomes a matter of compassion to attend them.

It is scarcely credible what misery is sometimes inflicted by a sneer or a malicious remark. Persons who have the established lead may indeed brave public opinion, but against those who are struggling, an insinuation against character, the most vague and uncertain, is deadly. The victim of the insensible weapon finds her progress checked, but does not know why; sometimes received and courted, sometimes unaccountably neglected. Whether forgotten because she is insignificant, or dropped because she has given offence, or shunned because guilty of some sin against fashion, or omitted by utter mistake, it is impossible to discover. Exhausted, disappointed, mortified, but unable to renounce the contest, life passes on in a miserable succession of hopes and mortifications. Is it surprising that the influence of women over the minds of men, should be deprecated, when their own minds are formed under such circumstances?

When a man who has any reputation for ability betrays some of the petty or heartless qualities which proceed from a worldly spirit, it is sometimes the custom with his own sex, to console themselves by attributing it all to the influence of his wife; if she be ugly, it is quite clear she is to blame, and he is only to be pitied. But in truth, if it were any great justification for a man that he suffered his conduct to be governed by an ugly fool, yet it cannot be admitted that his weakness requires any such reason to account

for it. When we consider the powerful circumstances that men have to preserve them from frivolity, in a vigorous education, in the management of important interests, in freedom, in the means of professional distinction, and in openings innumerable for ambition and hope, it is surprising to see how easily their heads are turned by the great world. It is rather that the objects of their frivolity are different in several respects from those of women, than that they are less contemptible; and unhappily, the consequences to society are a good deal more serious. The competitions of women oftener end in mere devotion to fashion and society; those of men, in the more ruinous frivolities of the race-course, and other forms of wasteful amusement. With the heartless and detestable vices to which they lead, I have nothing to do, but simply to suggest their connexion. In other cases, the very objects themselves are the same in both sexes. The same courting of great people, the same petty tricks to accomplish their purpose, the same passion for dress, ostentation, and luxurious indulgences are apparent in both sexes, with no greater difference than that in one there is a deeper current of self-interest, in the other, more of mere vanity. The mind becomes moulded in a form of society which fosters the disposition to selfishness, and obliterates even the notion, that a man owes it to society to be useful in some way or another. Every important interest is kept out of sight, and in their place, trivial concerns are established. In minds thus debased, the incapacity of strong and generous feeling leads to dishonest factions and corrupt legislation.

Similar comments have often been addressed to women, to dissuade them from the pursuit of pleasure. The principal difference between those attempts and the present one is, that in the former, the object was to prove that a worldly spirit was incompatible with the duties of women to God, and to their families; here, there is superadded the purpose of showing the connexion of that spirit with national decay, and thereby of giving to women a more enlarged view of the sphere of their duties to society, without detracting from the sanctity of any other duties. If such characters as those described are to spread widely, no other argument is required to prove the injury to the country.

It has been shown why the great world is more corrupted by the vices of luxury than the middle classes, and why they, who have to force their way into it, are generally its most corrupted members. But it must not be overlooked that, throughout the whole of that important portion of the community ranged under the head of the middle classes, each society, in every part of the country, has a *relative* great world of its own. The struggle to enter these minor "great worlds," as it everywhere stimulates the same passions, will everywhere produce similar vices, though less in degree and less generally. For the reasons explained, it is easier for persons in a moderate station to resist the authority and example of the society they live in, than for those who belong to the highest: their defects are more corrigible. But though the deeper corruption of the great world is a general truth, it is one still

more general, that the corruptions of wealth will be worst, where they are least accompanied by the progress of knowledge and refinement. These, however insufficient to control the vices of luxury, are, nevertheless, in their own nature a corrective to them. The knowledge may be imperfectly applied to practice—the refinement may be partly misdirected, but without them, the vices would be still less restrained. Therefore when mercantile or other pursuits have produced very great wealth, and education and knowledge are unhappily left very deficient, it is strictly accordant with all that has been said of the moral advantages of the middle classes, in general, still to admit that in the above portions of them the corruptions of luxury will exhibit some of their worst forms. Local or professional influences may also give a predominance to particular defects, which are lessened or disguised by the refined manners of the great; the real corrective to them is to be found in the progress of education, not in courting the society of people of rank. Mental cultivation would correct that mania so remarkable in all English people, of trying to force their entrance into societies which are determined to exclude them, and which are imagined to contain some peculiar excellence, merely because they are the most exclusive. Due cultivation of mind, a generous regard to the interests of their country, higher views of their own social office, and juster ones of true happiness, would lead women to feel, that in abandoning that senseless struggle they sacrifice neither real refinement—nor the pleasures of society—nor honourable distinction—nor the

means of extended influence—nor the chances of advancing their fortune, of making friends or marrying happily. What other objects can any of them seek in the world?

There is but one valid reason for turning from the society of our equals, to seek those with whom we can have but few interests and sympathies in common. It is that we may refine our manners and meet with persons of more enlarged minds, than our own sphere may afford us. But it is better to promote the education and the tastes, that bring refinement and conversation to our own class, than to seek for good models at the cost of independence of spirit. Experience has also proved, that it is less the graces than the vices and follies of the great world that are contracted by its imitators. But wherever our lot in life may be cast, when the manners of it are discredited by bad taste and contracted ideas, persons of birth and refinement will certainly withdraw in disgust from the society of their neighbours. This has many ill consequences. It is felt as a stigma, and generates animosities. It misleads the injudicious and unreflecting in both classes, and they are the most numerous. The higher in social position, learn to apply that contempt to the station of those they account their inferiors, which is due only to gross defects of mind or character. But these are far from being universal, even in societies where there may be much to censure in the general manners. The inferiors, who are galled by neglect, are not led to cure their defects, but to despise the proprieties of their station. Instead of studying the refined principles of good breeding, they copy the

glaring peculiarities or the vices which they see on the surface of the great world, and which they vainly imagine will give them the stamp of fashion. Vulgarity is a term seldom applied with a definite meaning, but which people unhappily are taught to shrink from, more than from folly or vice. Real refinement consists neither in a fastidious delicacy, which unfits us for the duties of our station, nor in the special characteristics, (even when graceful,) of their manner, who have little to attend to but trifles. It rather consists in casting off such feelings and tastes as it is degrading to ourselves to possess, and in shunning the expression of whatever may be offensive to others. It is one of the happy results of an instructed and well-disciplined mind.

One of the peculiar offices of women is to refine society. They are very much shielded by their sex from the stern duties of men, and from that intercourse with the basest part of mankind, which is opposed to the humanizing influence of mental cultivation. On them, the improvement of society in these respects chiefly depends, and they who consider the subject with the views here offered, will become more and more convinced of the service they might render. Manners are, in truth, of great importance. If real refinement be a merit, it is surely desirable that it should show itself in the general deportment. Real vulgarity is the expression of something mean or coarse in sentiments or habits. It betrays the want of fine moral perceptions. The peculiarities in manner and deportment which proceed from the selfishness of the great world, when stripped of the

illusory influence of their apparent refinement, become grossly offensive. A cold repulsive manner, such as is commonly assumed by persons in high life, is sometimes a necessary shield against the pushing familiarity of underbred persons. Their tasteless imitations of habits and manners, which do not belong to their station or character, deserve the ridicule they meet with. The most offensive form vulgarity can take is an affectation of the follies and vices of high life. It is true that the notion of vulgarity is affixed, in the fine world, to many trifling modes of dress and deportment, which in themselves have no demerit whatever, except that something opposed to them has acquired an ephemeral propriety from the fancy of the great. But in real good breeding there is always a reason. It is far too little attended to in England in any class, though from acting as a continual corrective to selfish and unsocial affections, it is peculiarly requisite in all. Good manners consist in a constant maintenance of self-respect, accompanied by attention and deference to others; in correct language, gentle tones of voice, ease, and quietness in movements and action. They repress no gaiety or animation which keeps free of offence; they divest seriousness of an air of severity or pride. In conversation, good manners restrain the vehemence of personal or party feelings, and promote that versatility which enables people to converse readily with strangers, and take a passing interest in any subject that may be addressed to them.

The best way to cultivate this real good breeding, is to acquire the fine moral perceptions on which it

depends. The humanizing influence of beautiful and lofty images and sentiments in the mind, the quick perception of propriety that results from a judgment kept pliant by strong exercise, and the variety of conversation and expressions, caught up from good writers on good subjects, have never been doubted. How much more certain might this effect be on women, in whom it is not counteracted by early and laborious application to a rugged profession, or daily communication with the coarse or interested! Not unfrequently, men have a grave unsocial temper by nature, which, if their abilities at the same time are directed to abstruse, absorbing speculations, almost breaks off their dependence on the opinion of their fellow-creatures, and gives them (without any unamiable feelings) a clownish, or a morose and repulsive manner. This is not the case with women; nothing therefore lays a better foundation for their manners and taste than mental cultivation. That the formation of manners depends chiefly on them is quite undisputed. Who but a mother can form the manners of her son? Not being tied down like men to professions, women have in general more time for liberal and enlarging studies, which would fit them peculiarly for diffusing the *moral* influence of science and letters.

If the knowledge we possess is ever to be generally and effectively brought to bear on moral improvement, and if the repulsive principles which are everywhere shaking the social fabric, are ever to yield to enlightened benevolence, women must be principal agents; for while pride and rivalry, bigotry and pre-

judice are instilled and fostered in youth, they will rarely be rooted out of the man by his own efforts. The vices of luxury cannot be effectively controlled, without so raising the education of women, as to give them right views on the subject. Neither can this be done without pronouncing their social rights more clearly, that they may have the generous spirit of citizens, rather than the contracted feelings of dependents, who know neither what they may do, or what they may not; whether they shall be indulged in the caprices of a tyrant, or called on for the submission of a slave.

It may seem inconsistent to censure the exclusiveness of the aristocracy, and at the same time so pointedly dissuade other persons from seeking their society, or adopting their sentiments; but this is quite reconcileable. They whose wealth or connexions do not enable them to command the first society, if determined to seek it, must do so by enduring its insolence and adopting its follies; they are therefore corrupted. But a person of rank, who associates with the refined and the educated in other stations, does so, that he may shake off the prejudices of his own, and know more of mankind. The consequences are very different. Friendships and very close intimacies are perhaps best amongst equals. A friend must be one whom we can consult in our difficulties, and call upon for comfort and assistance, which may be received without scruple, because it can be returned in kind. But to confess our distresses to a superior in power and fortune, is almost a petition for his bounty and patronage. On the other

side, the habitual confidences of a man of great wealth, must relate to many things, that would appear almost a mockery of the humble state of his poorer friend. The cares and anxieties, the hopes and pleasures of the two, relate to objects wholly different, and respecting which there is therefore little sympathy. Such friendships, even when formed in youth, too often wither away, less perhaps from individual demerit than human infirmity; for often no one can say how it has happened. As in that beautiful, changing picture, the diorama, the eye that expatiated in the perfect temple of a god, now wanders over its smouldering and unseemly ruins; but no watching can detect how or when its changes occurred. Many have been the sad requiems over estranged affections, chanted to the wilds and rocks, the fixed memorials of other days, which seemed again to syllable the words and accents of earnest, undoubting, animated friendship, gone for ever. Gifts of birth or fortune may have led the one by successive steps to distinction, wealth, honour, power; the other, by the invisible force that sways human destiny, may have been cast from the wheel of fortune, dashed back from every petty eminence gained with exhausting toil, and left to struggle on, alone and unnoticed. How shall the hearts of these two keep pace together? The first buoyant with success, and finding the easy world bend before him, will have all his interests and associations wound together with animating, agreeable emotions; and the less social temper and severer sentiments of the other, formed in the rugged school of adversity are distasteful to him—

"they are extravagant, impracticable, unfit for the world." If the high assumption, which unknown to himself may disguise his better nature, be repelled with somewhat of jealous rudeness, by a spirit familiar with suffering, but impatient of humiliation, he will mistake it for a peevish temper, and think he has done much if he bear it with patience. His sympathies are gone to those who have climbed the eminence with him, or whom he has met with in his course. His former friend belongs to another sphere.

But these objections to intimate unions, where want of sympathy may endanger our happiness, do not apply to the terms on which we cultivate general society. Pleasure or improvement may be drawn from the conversation of any one who has worth and ability, and it is rather desirable to meet with diversity of feelings and views.

General refinement of manners would contribute much towards removing that unsocial barrier, which now separates different classes from mutual intercourse, and which I believe is almost peculiar to the English. It stiffens society with reserve and dulness, and has many worse consequences. It is preposterous to carry the aristocratic spirit into the mere interchange of ideas and opinions, upon subjects common to both sides, and nowise affecting individual privacy. It keeps the aristocracy too ignorant of public feeling. Hence it is that they are usually bad judges, either of the force or the weakness of the moral causes which are operating around them. Unless their habits of mind have been corrected by the sharp contention of parliamentary life, they are

often unable to enforce or defend their opinions. They retreat with an air of offended dignity from the strength of an argument, as they would from an ill-bred contradiction. The spirit of aristocratic seclusion does not render men discriminating as to whom they shall seek. Often, the persons who possess the greatest refinement of mind and manners, are those whose existence in his neighbourhood the great man least knows. Not caring for his rank, not wanting his countenance, and not desiring the society of one who placards his superiority on his brow, they either keep away, or accept only the most ordinary civilities. The effect of political contests, however, and the strife of ambition is at least to rouse mental activity. It is, therefore, nearly impossible, that men who have any natural talent should not sometimes prefer the vigour displayed in the conversation of scientific or professional men, to the tame mediocrity of the fine world. But with women it is different. For the reasons already fully explained, they become the principal upholders of luxurious and frivolous tastes. They frequently draw the other sex into a course of dissipation, the latter would rather avoid. Men who are disposed to a life of useful sobriety, and who are willing to cultivate the society of able and informed men, are sometimes turned from that path, by the passive resistance of the female part of their families. Women whose minds are absorbed by the vanities of the great world, will not endeavour to cultivate the acquaintance of persons whom they cannot appreciate, and whom they despise as unfashionable. They do not seek to banish restraint

and make the time pass agreeably, and consequently, after a few efforts the society drops.

Slaves to manner and epithets, they have little discrimination; and when the gloss of the fashionable air is wanting, they can scarcely discover the difference between a superior and an ordinary character; especially in their own sex, whose worth can seldom be blazoned by report. Hence in their choice of friends and intimates, many of the finest qualities a woman could have, would in their eyes be little recommendation.

It is at present too much the case, that when we leave London, we leave the society of those who are highly cultivated in mind and manners. Equal mental excitement cannot indeed be reasonably expected in the country. London is the rallying point for the distinguished and the rising in every department of social life. Every form of society is probably to be found in greater perfection there, than in any other place. In country societies, there may perhaps be many persons in whom there is little to offend, but it is rare when there is much to excite or improve. Sometimes the men are all sportsmen, sometimes all farmers, sometimes that well-known composition, a genuine country squire, made up of ignorance, self-importance, and game-laws. Men of enlarged minds, and women with refined manners, are partly justified for living very much apart from such neighbours. It is in the power of women to form the minds of their sons to better tastes.

The increase in the number of persons living upon independent incomes, is said to have been of

late years remarkably great. This is likely to prove in the end rather an evil than a benefit, if, in place of increasing the number of those who can devote time to mental improvement, it only adds to the number who live in the indulgence of luxury and indolence: this is a serious consideration, and one which alone would deserve that unusual pains should be taken with the rising generation. The moral character impressed upon youth should be of a generous nature, and such as would command the respect of mankind. It cannot be instilled by vulgar or frivolous mothers.

I cannot conclude these arguments in favour of the influence that women might exert, without repelling the notion, that a more solid education given to that sex would be unfriendly to amusement and gaiety. Social amusements are necessary to the young, and often the serious cares of older persons are better relieved by the animation of society, than by any other means within reach. Persons whose mornings are absorbed by close application, come into society not for instruction, but relaxation; when the mind has been over-wrought, there ensues a depression, which prevents home from supplying the same excitements as usual; nothing disperses it so well as conversation and the light amusements of mixed society. Too often, also, there are cares and sorrows at home, which it is not only useless but wrong to brood over, but from which it is hard to abstract one's attention while within their reach. Under many such trials, whether springing from health, circumstances, or the characters and conduct of those

whom we live with, the exhilarating influence of general society and its amusements, assist very much to preserve good temper and cheerfulness. A bright apartment, gay looks and dresses, the mingled sounds of voices and music, the cordial reception, the news of the day, and the interest which sympathy gives to things that in solitude would scarcely be attended to,—these disperse the gathering gloom, and call forth the imprisoned spirits. The effect is carried back to domestic life, where grievances lose their exaggerated importance, and dissensions are forgotten instead of being sifted. It would be very mistaken philosophy to despise a class of pleasures, which, within the limits of moderation, has had the sanction of persons of the greatest worth in all times: but in truth, had assemblies for the purpose of mere amusement, no other use than supplying a safe channel for vanity and idleness, they could scarcely be dispensed with. It is desirable to control those propensities, but it argues great ignorance of nature to expect to extirpate them. Enthusiasts are misled by instances of pensive and retiring dispositions, which seem never to need excitement, but such characters will always be unusual; it is therefore inexpedient to stop up the safety-valve of human folly. Experience fully proves that all mankind cannot be made saints or philosophers, especially under five-and-twenty; the attempt, therefore, has ill effects. If it be impossible to eradicate vanity and the eagerness for pleasure, it is better those passions should exhale in a ball-room, than corrupt the simplicity of religion and benevolence.

The young may be too fond of admiration, too solicitous for amusement, and too much excited by it when it arrives, without losing the consciousness that these are follies which ought not to govern them without restraint. But when vanity mingles with practices which ought to be sacred, and which pass for such, one of two things must follow—either the seeming sanctity blinds the enthusiast to his own secret motives, and then his judgment is perverted; or he continues secretly conscious of the mean motives that actuate him, and then he is corrupted. It is not too much to say, that in matters of piety and charity praise should never be thought of, and seldom, very seldom even accepted.

In so pointedly urging the adoption of these views on the middle classes, in preference to the highest, it is not meant to deny the greater individual influence a woman of high station would have over others; her place would naturally be a leading one. In every change of opinions or customs, what many desire, is often delayed because no one dares to begin. In women this feeling has a peculiar propriety; and rank, which gives a right to take the lead, would therefore render her who possessed it an invaluable assistant. But it is much more important to the interests of society, to improve the education of women generally, than to withdraw a few individuals of high rank from the errors of their station. The wide dissemination of the vices springing from luxury, is a greater national evil than the excesses of a particular set. If, from the nature of things, the highest class must contain the greatest number

of persons who are corrupted by luxury, it will not be of any great moment, whether a few more or less of its members have shunned the contagion. But it is on the other hand of great importance to raise up in the country a standard of taste and morals, that shall prevent the example and opinions of the most enervated class, from becoming a model to others. But the sentiments must be looked for as the result of vigorous principles, implanted in youth; they cannot spring from formal precepts. If England is destined to run the same course as ancient nations, if her civilization is to be cast into ruin, for future, perhaps far distant people to revive and amend—if the great experiment now in progress, to renovate without revolutionizing society, is to fail—it will be because the diseased morality that pervades the aristocracy, will have pervaded the middle classes also, and overwhelmed the rising spirit of the country. But if that spirit cannot be overwhelmed, it behoves those who are resisting instead of guiding it, to reflect on the consequences to themselves. While they have only the violence of a vicious and ignorant mob to contend with, their position may be secure, but no longer. As a political element, the use of an aristocracy is important. Perhaps no great country can exist long without one; but the prevailing spirit of ours, is acting as a weight against the influence of progressive knowledge. It is spreading the defects of its own character through classes more numerous than itself, and even more important to society; and it is introducing, through our schools and home discipline, a mean and contracted spirit of selfishness, instead

of the generous character attributed to high birth. Moralists, struck with the influence which the manners of the great have upon society, have hitherto attached perhaps too much consequence to converting them. They do not seem to have always reflected sufficiently, that the root of the evil consists in that slavish deference to rank and fashion, which it is certainly the effect of a good education to weaken: a cultivated understanding almost necessarily gives independence of sentiments. We see this already to a great extent; though indeed adulation of rank and wealth, is so entwined with all our habits and our systems of education, that it is very hard to escape its influence. I shall conclude these reflections on the moral influences of luxury, with again protesting against the imputation of endeavouring to create a prejudice against individuals, because they are raised by rank or wealth.

It would be great injustice not to discern and honour the disinterested virtue of some of our nobility. The understanding and principle, which can see through the illusions and resist the temptations of a station which want, neglect, or oppression can never reach, and to which truth can scarcely penetrate, are of no common order. The English nobility are probably the least corrupt in Europe; and in private life, the brightest example of moral dignity, which it has been the blessing of the present writer to know, was one born to the possession of every circumstance, that gives splendour and influence to social station.

CHAPTER VII.

LUXURY CONSIDERED CONOMICALLY.

SECTION I.

General View of the Subject.

A PRINCIPAL object in the composition of this work has been, that the principles contained in it should be directed to specific and practical results. There has been a constant endeavour to point out the consequences to society of errors, which, if taken individually, are not very culpable, and to assist the younger readers to apply the truths they acknowledge in theory, to the regulation of their practice.

In the present chapter, some views shall be given of those conditions, which are necessary results of art and refinement. They involve a large portion of our fellow-creatures, and many of them are attended with great suffering. A full investigation of such a subject would manifestly be out of place in this work, even if knowledge and ability for the purpose were not also wanting. But a few of the most striking cases shall be selected for examination, with the purpose of proving the necessity of general attention to the subject, and of showing the criminality of enjoying the blessings of wealth and refinement, without honest and earnest endeavours to

prevent the miseries, which accumulate through neglect and indifference. These pages will not change the conduct of those, who are grown old in callous disregard to the misery and the vice of the working classes, but they may speak to the hearts of women, of mothers who are moulding the minds of their sons, and of wives who can influence their husbands. I cannot believe, that considerate and religious mothers can be brought to discern the connexion, of selfish neglect or ignorant prejudice, with the vice and wretchedness of millions, without determining that their sons, at least, shall be brought up in habits of thought and action, that shall place them among the benefactors of mankind. Parents cannot avoid trying to impress their children with their own sincere opinions as to particular measures, nor indeed ought they to attempt it; yet on such points, with the best intentions, they may be mistaken. But that in which there is no danger of error is, to form the minds of the young so as to give them a good judgment, a single-minded desire for truth, and a warm feeling of duty to others, implanted so early and upheld so consistently, that it shall cease to be distinguishable from natural impulse. To this mental training should be added, the practical habit of compelling the trivial concern to give way to the important. These are the principles that are appropriate to every class, compatible with every profession and personal duty, with every step in the progress of knowledge, and every change in the affairs of society. The young who imbibe them will advance with their age, instead of being

hoodwinked by the prejudices of the past; and they will be as little disposed to rash innovation as to slothful neglect, for real philanthropy and an earnest inquiry for the truth in every case, are adverse to both errors. Whatever other imperfections may have been left in their education (and no education is faultless), the children who owe to their mother such powers as these "will rise up and call her blessed." What is required is, that the endeavour to restrain the prevalence of misery and vice should be universally recognised, as one of the duties of the wealthier classes. I shall attempt to exhibit the dependence of prosperity or misery among the people, on the degree of knowledge and the principles that prevail among the higher orders. Women (notwithstanding numerous exceptions) are often left by their education with the most confused ideas on such subjects, or with none at all; and a few clear views of the general causes of penury and distress, will assist very much to form a right judgment in particular and more complicated cases. By giving only the most general and least disputable views, of the connexion between the knowledge of one class and the condition of the other, the subject may be kept more separate from references to our own policy, and our judgment will be less warped by our prejudices. The object of this work is neither to supply specific knowledge, nor to recommend particular measures, but to lead the mind to feel the importance of acquiring sound knowledge, and learning to judge discreetly of every measure, (if possible,) on which we may be called to act or to speculate.

It was observed in the last chapter that the penury, the disease, the moral and mental degradation, that so frequently pain our hearts in almost every country that we traverse, are much worse in semi-barbarous countries than in the more polished. In the former, overgrown wealth, contrasted with general misery, is the most frequent condition. It requires very high civilization for comfort to be the rule, and misery the exception. But yet, in an extensive and populous country, the absolute number of the destitute may be so great as to shock every reflecting mind. In these islands, one out of twenty would probably give a result of 1,400,000 miserable beings. I fear the conjecture is not toc high. Misery and depravity are very much within control, but it would require great knowledge and research, to form any well-grounded opinion as to how far they might be remedied. The excitement and rewards of industry are sometimes greatly impeded by political institutions, the consideration of which would be improper in this work, and the conditions of property are wholly dependent on those causes. But political institutions themselves are dependent on the progress of the nation in knowledge and morals. Institutions interwoven with the ideas of a wealthy aristocracy and middle class, even if proved defective, could not be altered without a great extension of better knowledge. When misery proceeds from bad institutions, the diffusion of knowledge prepares the public mind to acquiesce in the necessary changes; and when it cannot be wholly prevented, knowledge teaches us at least how to

lessen it. It also helps to reconcile us to unavoidable evils, which might otherwise be aggravated by false remedies. The government and institutions of a people may be considered as the joint product of their knowledge, their habits, and their prejudices. The discussion of the merits or defects of their government, or its measures, belongs to politics; but it is essential to the purpose of this inquiry to show by a few striking cases, the effects on the character and welfare of the people, that the measures of their rulers may produce. A strong conviction, that public measures are too important to be compromised for a trifling self-interest, might be usefully impressed upon many, who would never affect to judge of such questions themselves.

Section II.

Extremes of Wealth and of Want.

In countries that are highly civilized, the circumstance that strikes us most painfully is great disparity of condition. Among uncivilized nations, if all are alike poor, alike exposed to famine, to epidemics, to plunder, to massacre, to slavery, yet these miseries, we think, are not rendered intolerable, by contrast with those who are enjoying their ease in the midst of the general distress.

It is shocking to religion, to reason, to common humanity, and to prudence, that one part of the community should be suffering privations which

nature shudders to contemplate, while another is surfeiting every sense with superfluity.

It is shocking to religion, that hundreds of thousands should be ground to the earth, with toil so incessant and monotonous, as to preclude the formation of a moral and intellectual existence, while others are wasting the privilege of leisure in uselessness.

It is shocking to reason, that the goods of life should be divided in such proportions as to injure both parties, corrupting the one by excess, and brutalizing the other through penury.

It is dreadful to humanity, that no hope should cheer unremitting toil, but merely to escape starving, while, all around, ostentation and intemperance seem directed to change the stupor of despair to the rapacity of desire.

And it is opposed to all prudence, that they who, for all that are dear to them, can scarcely procure bread, should be tempted to contrast their hovels, with the palaces of those who never knew a want.

> Are these the cares of him we pious call?
> To feed his pride, are thus our lives to fall?
> While every gushing rill to us is dry,
> No fountain yields our burning lips supply;
> From the far distant Jordan's bounteous springs,
> He, for his own glad board, the crystal brings;
> Where the selected few apart recline,
> And mix the cooling stream with Cretan wine.
>
> *Gierusalemme Liberata.*

Overgrown wealth, even independently of its contrast with misery, is felt to be undesirable, though no very definite idea is formed of the nature of the evil. Enormous accumulations are rather dis-

approved, though no one can say how or where a limit to them should be placed. To put an arbitrary limit to the wealth individuals may hold, might do a great deal of mischief. Many of the undertakings most beneficial to society require very large capitals, such as will not be hazarded without the prospect of large returns. Nothing but the desire of wealth leads men to exert their abilities actively in enterprises of that nature, rather than live in comparative idleness, on the competence their money would afford if merely lent at interest. It would be hard to fix any limit that would have much practical effect, without entailing consequences that would be very oppressive. A father with a large family would be prevented from accumulating property, which, divided among his children, would be moderate. If permitted to raise a fortune for each of his children, the control of it must be in his hands, at least during their minority; and all that time his own wealth would be too great. The children might die, and leave the excess altogether in the father's possession; or they might become heirs at law to some other relations, whose property, joined to their paternal estates, would require a new distribution with all its attendant vexations and difficulties. Property invested in trade is not always divisible without being sold, and a great loss incurred. If the law compelled parents to distribute their overplus among their children, the independence of parents, in which children would be brought up, would be a great evil. If the law were not compulsory, it would be no law at all.

Wealth in the form of money or movables admits of indefinite increase, by the progress of industry and art; the whole mass of national riches, in a rising country, is continually increasing; the specific amount of individual property, therefore, which at one period would have been a great excess, would cease to be so at another; so that the standard fixed with regard to the circumstances of one period, would be unfair in a succeeding one. But successive adjustments would be still worse. No one would know when the legislature might step in and derange all his proceedings.

Not the least of the evils, attendant on a legal limitation of wealth, would be the corruption of morals the attempt would entail, from the evasions of a law, against which, so many feelings of natural right would revolt; and the indignation, which an inquisitorial search into private affairs would occasion. A law to limit accumulation would introduce a prodigal spirit. Men engaged in prosperous business, would not be temperate and frugal that they might save what they would have to give away as soon as gathered, and that, without the return of gratitude inspired by voluntary generosity. Whenever they saw before them a stream of prosperity, they would indulge in a course of lavish expenditure. The pleasure of that depends on the social vices of vanity and idleness, which are very contagious; soon therefore, there might be little national wealth to divide.

On the other side, it is argued that many of the above objections, which cannot be easily disputed,

do not apply to the possession of land, the most powerful of all forms of wealth. No inquisitorial search is required to ascertain its amount—it does not admit of increase, for the small portions reclaimed from the sea are of no moment in the question. As population increases therefore, its fixed and invariable quantity bears a less and less proportion to the numbers of the people. It is also the pre-requisite of everything else. Not a house, nor a mill, nor a cottage, nor a road can be made, except what the proprietor of the land permits. Neither a quarry nor a mine can be opened, except on the same conditions. As no one can erect a house or a factory except by permission, he can neither settle nor carry on any business, till he has obtained terms from the landlord. When land is not sold but let, landlords can very often control the personal rights of their tenants, or drive them to ruin. All this gives to the owners of the land immense power over their fellow citizens. It has therefore been argued, that it could not be inconsistent with the sacred regard due to property, to restrain the pride and factitious desires of one portion of the community, from engrossing a great deal more of the soil than they can use beneficially. It is held that very great landed properties are upon the whole less productive, than those held by smaller proprietors. On the other hand, it is held that land divided into very small lots, producing sufficient only to maintain the cultivators, would soon occasion a dense population of very poor people, who would have no security against famine as their numbers increased.

The tenure of land, indeed, affects the general condition so much, that its terms and the consequences of them, should always be examined in looking for the causes of distress. The existence and well-being of all, being so dependent on the conditions of the land, governments have been usually held competent, without infringing the principles of justice, to impose such terms on its tenure as the advantage of the country appeared to require; and they would evidently be equally competent to set limits to the individual possession of land, if such should be thought expedient for the general good. Such are the principal views that may be given on both sides of the question, as to the propriety of restricting great accumulation. But whatever may be thought of the right or the prudence of *legal* interference with the rights of individuals, it is generally felt that enormous individual wealth is not a very healthy condition; and that it is therefore desirable to promote such habits, and favour such circumstances, as gradually lead to a more equal distribution.

Overgrown fortunes are often the consequence of bad institutions, which have the effect of enabling one part of the community to enrich themselves, either directly or indirectly, at the expense of the rest. In such cases, great wealth has the further effect of generating a powerful interest in support of an oppressive system, which checks the hopes and industry of the great body of the people, in favour of others who give little or no value to society in return*. In the following section, a few examples

* See Note F. at the end of the volume.

will be given, of institutions which lead to those vicious extremes of wealth and want. It will then be seen how much the correction of them, depends on the growth and diffusion of knowledge and intelligence.

SECTION III.

Chief Causes of great Disparity.

The most obvious cause of excessive inequality is want of freedom.

Slaves can never acquire property except by sufferance. Next in degree is the condition of serfs. Bound to the soil, they cannot leave the place where their labour is ill paid, to go where it is well paid*. They must work for whatever the lord of the soil chooses to give them, and that is usually the least allowance, that will maintain the powers of labour. The rest of the produce belongs all to him. He exports it, and lays out the returns on foreign commodities. The transaction being carried on through the intervention of merchants, does not alter the case. Nor even would the existence of some native manufacturing industry in the great towns, make any material difference to the bulk of the population. Serfs cannot be buyers. For even supposing that

* Correctly speaking, serfs have some rights by law, or by custom; but their circumstances throw them so much into the power of the land-owners that, practically, their condition is as above stated. Endeavours have been made in several countries to raise their condition; and latterly with some success.

See JONES *On the Sources of Wealth and Taxation.*

where this wretched system prevails, trade were not also vexed, still the market for its products would not extend beyond the nobles and a few other bodies. Interchanges of the rude produce of the landed proprietors, for the manufactures and imports of a small body of traders, might be carried on among themselves, without ever reaching to the great mass of the people. In this and all similar conditions, in proportion as the system is less broken by the spirit of commerce, property tends to settle in few hands, and produce the extremes of great individual riches, and great general misery.

Institutions founded on the feudal principle, continued to produce effects of a similar nature, long after the people had ceased to be attached to the soil. Feudalism created one extreme at once, by grants of large tracts of land to nobles by whom they were not alienable, and who drew their revenues from vassals, who made a profit of the rude tillage of the miserable beings under them. Thus the higher orders became gradually possessed of wealth and power like petty sovereigns, and the lower were ground to the dust.

Similar evils occur in various parts of Europe, from the nature of the terms on which land is held. The terms of tenure, sometimes produce effects on the manner of life of the people, not always obvious before they are shown by experience*; and which form a character of habit so strong, as to render any improvement extremely difficult. Perhaps one of the disadvantages attendant on great landed proper-

* See JONES *On the Distribution of Wealth.*

ties is, that they seem to entail somewhat of the feudal spirit. An importance is attached to the possession of the soil, founded as often on pride as on its real utility, and which tends to prevent that division of it, which otherwise men's interests would lead them to make. They often endure great inconvenience, rather than part with a portion which they perhaps seldom see, and the revenues of which they receive, only to pay away to their creditors. They purchase estate after estate, merely for the name of proprietor, the purchase-money remaining a mortgage on the property, and absorbing nearly the whole of the rents. Very large estates prevent the attachment, that should subsist between landlords and tenants. To the greater part of his property the landlord is a stranger, and he cannot feel the same interest for tenants whom he never sees, and concerning whose condition he may be grossly deceived. Agents become the worst form of owners. Without full responsibility for the condition of the tenantry, it is their duty to remit the full amount of the rent to their employer. They have many temptations to misconduct, and not the same power to improve the condition of the people, as if the estate were their own. Great landed fortunes tend also to create a train of dependents, who produce either absolutely nothing, or something so transitory that it is not worth estimating. The proportion, even of useful artisans and manufacturers, which can be maintained in a country, must depend on the supply of food there is for them. Whenever food is dear, (which is identical with being scarce,) great distress must

ensue, if many people by means of money earned for trifling services to the wealthy, are enabled to draw a subsistence out of the common stock*.

It may be said that raising up trains of idle dependants who draw from, rather than contribute to the prosperity of the country is not peculiar to landholders, more than to other wealthy persons; I believe, however, that this custom really adheres more to the holders of land, than to mercantile professions. Living in the country demands more personal services than are necessary in towns, where the accumulation of goods and persons gives greater facilities for supplying men's wants. The disposition of the retired tradesman or merchant, though it may lead to ostentation or sensuality, does not appear to lead equally to gathering round him a train of dependants; his early habits rather inspire a reluctance to paying superfluous hands, and until he becomes a landed proprietor, or begins to emulate the society and manners of that class, his establishment frequently exhibits the incongruity of a gorgeous display of luxury, with too few attendants.

But this is not the chief proof of the fact. Except in a few instances, in which the members of the mercantile world have wholly forsaken their early sphere and connexions, no barrier of opinion exists among them to prevent their sons from returning to some branch of business again, if the increase of their families should require it, but the families of the aristocracy, however moderate their provision, however great their necessity, rely entirely on military

* See Note G. at the end of the volume.

and clerical professions, the bar, and official appointments. These employments, however necessary to the community, are in consequence usually overstocked; and an irresistible interest is thereby created, to keep up in all those departments numbers of unnecessary appointments, to be paid for by the public. Hence, it is not unreasonable to attribute this social disease to the spirit inherent (from whatever cause) in great landed proprietors. It was carried to its highest pitch in France before the great revolution; there was a large standing army; almost every gentleman was a soldier; the prejudice against trade was inveterate; and the number of monks and secular clergy was immense, being increased by the religious prejudices of the times. The French court was notorious for its profligate expenditure on worthless favourites; the farmers of the taxes, the financiers as they were called, were so numerous, that they formed a class almost peculiar to France; their power of oppression was terrible, and their rapacity was notorious.

The people were pressed to the earth by taxes levied injudiciously from the industrious classes, the nobles and clergy having many exemptions. There was the greatest oppression, with the least proportional profit to the government; for of all that was raised, comparatively little found its way to the treasury. In consequence, agriculture was backward. The industrious were prevented from gathering capital to reclaim new soils, or improve the old ones; the higher classes paid little attention to the subject, the lands were often ill let, tillage was generally ignorantly conducted, and the number of holidays

enjoined by the church, added fresh impediments to the industry, by which the nation was to be supported. Thus, whatever produce could be brought forth under so many disadvantages, was absorbed chiefly by the privileged classes, and nothing was left to the laborious but a meagre subsistence, till at length that circuit was complete, by which the extremes of misery and luxury met together in deadly explosion*.

Among the causes of misery above enumerated, are the fiscal exactions to which the French were at that time subject. In some countries this source of poverty is such as to paralyze the powers both of industry and fertility; in Persia and Egypt, for instance, a man dare not be suspected of having saved a little money to better his condition. The first symptom of increased comfort, would be a signal for the governors of the provinces to impose arbitrary exactions, consequently little wealth is created, and the character of the people becomes utterly degraded†. Somewhat akin to the effects of excessive and unequal taxation and exactions, are those of party privileges and exclusions, which frequently prevail, to the great detriment of society. They depress one portion of the community, and embitter the feelings of both. In favouritism of this description, the unthinking see nothing more than that the superiority and power, which, by the very nature of society, must fall more to some than to others, is given to one class by authority, instead of

* See Note H. at the end of the volume. † See Note I. at the end of the volume.

being left to free competition; that class being (as they assume) most deserving. This superior desert, even if real at first, would not, however, continue very long; it would soon be destroyed by the custom of trusting to favour rather than to personal character. But without stopping now to trace all the moral and political consequences, of giving a forced direction to power and fortune, it may be affirmed, that the worst flow from the destruction of hope and self-respect in the excluded, and from the tempers generated by despair of justice.

In estimating the condition of inferiors, it is strange the potency of hope should be so often forgotten. We feel, that by it every action of our own lives is directed; that without rousing it we can enforce no effort on the part of our children; that the very expression of incurable melancholy, the excuse for inert and discreditable indolence is, "I have nothing to look to;" and yet, when discussing the condition of whole bodies of our fellow-creatures, of those, too, who can maintain themselves only by unremitting activity, how frequently are the circumstances, that give a chill to this motive, overlooked! When the race is not to the swift, nor employment to the able, nor distinction to the wise, nor credence to the true, nor confidence to the honest, nor acquittal and condemnation according to evidence, but all are overruled by the star of the favourite, hope is destroyed, and a general character of recklessness becomes that of the people. Nor is it at all necessary that every one should have personal experience of this injustice, to be affected by its consequences, for national character is

created by sympathy and the undesigned education of surrounding influences. The ordinary motives that form the poor to a moral and prudential character are never awakened; they yield to the impulses and appetites of the moment, and what indeed can they do better? for were they to reflect on their condition, what could support them against the sense of their degradation, except enthusiasm? A disposition to that feeling is generally taken hold of by designing persons for bad purposes, or it leaves the mind to be enslaved by the worst forms of religion. Either event withdraws the people from the pursuits that might improve their condition. Education, the only effectual remedy for people in a low intellectual and moral state, would scarcely be possible while the partiality, the cause of the evil, continued unaltered. The means of education must be chiefly in the hands of the ruling party; the low and degraded cannot educate themselves; but education, conducted by a party made predominant by favouritism, will naturally have its advantages directed principally to their own adherents, in order to render the difference between them and the others as glaring as possible. In such conditions of society, therefore, wealth tends to centre in few hands, and the body of the people will remain in the low state that the improvidence of mere animal existence perpetuates. This last observation introduces the only other cause of great disparity of condition, on which I shall detain the reader's attention, namely, the ignorance and vices of the people themselves. Whatever the corruptions arise

from,—oppression or bad religion, or war, or anarchy, or the innate disposition of the race, (if there be any such peculiarities in nature)—it is so manifest that misery must be incurable, while vice and ignorance are prevalent, that to enlarge on the position would merely be tedious.

There must be inequality. It would spring up in the progress of society, under the most impartial system that human wisdom could devise; it is the natural consequence of that diversity of abilities, wants, and desires, which leads to the formation of society. But surely we may doubt that we are impelled uncontrollably by a law of our nature, to a degree of disparity that defeats the very ends of our being,—intelligence and happiness. In the sketch just given of the most extensive and obvious causes of that disastrous result, is it not true that none of them are necessarily inherent in the nature of wealth and of high civilization? Knowledge and art have already done away with the worst of these evils; and in the further diffusion of knowledge, we may look for yet greater victories over the tenacious remains of time-sanctioned prejudice.

Section IV.

Evils attendant on some Branches of Industry.

In mourning over the ills of civilized life, it is very natural to contrast the poor manufacturer, pent up all day at an unhealthy employment, with the wild Indian living by the chase, and following his tribe in their adventurous wars: we almost

think it better to be scalped at once, than to pass the whole of life in spiritless constraint. Whenever we are in this mood, we naturally fix on the condition of the manufacturer rather than the field-labourer, because the latter has at least free air and light, with less restraint, since his labours close with the early evening. Long confinement, impure air, and excessive labour, are so adverse to life and to everything which constitutes enjoyment, that in fixing on the case of the manufacturer, we combine at one view, as we think, all the worst consequences that the progress of luxury entails on the laborious part of mankind. With regard to the tillers of the soil, whatever we may think they still suffer, we know that it used to be worse; formerly their condition was servile and oppressive to the last degree; and to them the progress of society has been unquestionably beneficial; our attention may therefore be confined to the condition of the manufacturing classes.

But it is not enough, simply to ascertain whether or not they actually suffer severely; unfortunately that question is too easily answered. What we seek, is to know how far misery is inseparable from their condition. In the beginning of the present inquiry, it was shown that arts and manufactures were a necessary consequence of that progressiveness, which is part of our nature, and without which our best and most distinguishing qualities would remain undeveloped; and it is strangely at variance with everything we experience in the providence of God, if those arts which are necessary to the perfection of

our nature, entail irremediable ruin on the large classes who practise them. The laws of nature all tend to good; the rule is at least so general, that if we meet with a seeming exception we always suspect our own knowledge, and that further investigation would correct the impression. In the physical world the direct end of design is utility; all the faculties of the mind and the affections of the heart have the same object. It is therefore improbable that by a progressive principle, the direct consequence of our faculties and of our natural circumstances, we should be urged on to a course which has its exit in misery and vice. This objection cannot be met by replying, that man may make a bad use of faculties given him for a good purpose; for in the arts, he is making as good a use as he can of his faculties: his design is utility, his means lawful, and his industry virtuous. If misery be the result, he is led to it by the right use of reason and by the course of nature; we cannot compare such conduct with acts that would be an abuse or misdirection of his faculties. In no other case do we ever hear it assumed, that misery and vice are the necessary consequences of any condition, to which we are clearly led by the constitution of nature. Systems of government and of legislation are natural results of the progressiveness of society, like arts and manufactures; they also have been attended with innumerable oppressions; they have generated a multitude of crimes and miseries, yet we never hear it assumed of them, that their inherent tendency is evil. It is not proposed to have none, or to go back to ruder

ones; we are rather urged to study those subjects more deeply and cautiously, that we may draw forth the benefits of which they are capable. Why should we act differently with respect to manufactures? If they are really a natural step in the progress of man, why lament their existence, rather than confide in the probability of there being means to correct their defects?

The first step for those who would acquire the power of reasoning rightly on this subject, when it comes before them, is to determine between the evils that spring really from the nature of manufactures, and those which are purely adventitious; for some of the most calamitous scenes that manufacturing populations have presented, have been either occasioned, or extremely aggravated, by causes quite foreign to the manufactures themselves. Many of the great fluctuations to which trade is exposed have thus arisen. Sometimes revolutions may destroy either the whole or large branches of the industry of a thriving country, sending forth multitudes to wander as beggars over the face of the earth, or die in penury at home; sometimes bad government checks internal prosperity, and under its influence, manufactures may continue to exist, but in a state of slow decay. If momentary gleams of prosperity occur they delude those who do not know the true cause of their failure, with hopes that their bad days are over, and success about to reward their patience. Calamities of this nature are not referable to the spirit of the manufacture, or the manner in which it is conducted. Among adventitious evils, therefore, we

should place all such sufferings as have sprung from political reverses, from wars and the vindictive policy they provoke, from bad legislation of any kind that fetters industry, or increases the cost of its materials, from derangement of the currency, and from all measures, whether proceeding from the injustice or the ignorance of governments, that interpose sudden impediments to the customary channels of commerce. All attempts to force some manufacture for which the country has no fitness, in order to rival some other where everything is favourable, and all prohibitions of some commerce to which capital had been attracted by its natural facilities are of this nature. These and similar acts, with instances of which history abounds, paralyze the industry already existing, and in its place introduce a sickly trade that only fosters wretchedness. Experience may possibly furnish a few instances in which a long contest with nature, and a prodigious expenditure of labour and capital, may have succeeded at last, in giving a permanent root to some production naturally unsuited to the place or the people; but it is still to be proved that the same efforts, directed to productions congenial to them, would not have yielded much greater returns, without the intermediate depression caused by an unthriving trade. I have seen a kitchen garden which I was told had cost twenty thousand pounds, because it was the fancy of the proprietor to place it on a spot, where there was nothing but rock and sea-sand. The earth was all brought to it by human labour; the vegetables and fruit when raised were very good,

but not different from, nor more abundant than the produce of other gardens of the same size. It might assuredly have been made elsewhere with a fourth part of the cost, or even much less; the rest of the outlay, therefore, was a loss to society; for if with the same expense, the owner might have made four gardens equally good, instead of one, there was just so much less garden produce in society. It makes no difference, to suppose that four gardens would have been more than were wanted, for the money might in that case have been laid out on something that was wanted—on houses, mills, factories, that would have supplied useful commodities to the public, brought a revenue of several hundreds a year to the proprietor, and left the garden besides. The great expenditure was therefore a loss, and so it is in all other cases, when the whole value *reproduced* is less than the whole value originally expended in the undertaking; for then society has lost an amount of value equal to the difference. And the same is true in a less degree, when the whole value *reproduced* (though it exceed what has been originally expended, yet) does not exceed it by so much as it might, if more prudently laid out. In this case the loss to society is not (as in the other,) absolute, but relative; society has gained a certain value, but might have gained more. A wasteful expenditure that produces a perennial return, though a small one, is indeed better than an expenditure that produces nothing. Something remained after spending twenty thousand pounds in feeding and maintaining the labourers who made the garden; nothing

at all remains after laying out that sum on feeding electors.

The garden on a rock exhibits the principle of the loss incurred by a nation, in forcing the people to make with great labour and expense what they could buy cheap. The most flourishing trades of France were wine and silk: by her abundance of these, she could have obtained from other countries whatever she pleased in exchange; her government however determined to encourage the production of home-made iron, which was much more expensive than what they could have imported, by buying it with their silks. This, observes Say*, added fifty francs to the price of every plough, and the loss to France in ploughs alone, amounted to forty-six millions of francs. Those millions would have been spent on other commodities, if they had not been spent on costly ploughs. The additional money the ironmongers earned, was taken from some other producers who were able to sell so much the less; and the whole nation had fewer commodities for their labour.

Many ill effects have been traced to the policy of forcing the home production of dear commodities, and prohibiting the purchase of cheap ones from abroad. M'Culloch says, that the trade of the city of Lyons, which from the time of Napoleon had begun to decay, between the years 1824 and 1828 sunk so much, that in the course of those years eleven thousand looms were stopped; we may imagine the terrible distress that must have ensued. In the

* *Cours complet d'Economie Politique.*

same year, there were in the Gironde six hundred thousand tons of wine, for which no sale could be had; the fall in price affected the vineyards, and a stop was put to every improvement. These consequences appeared to him to proceed from the false commercial policy of the French government*.

Napoleon's policy, having led him to exclude foreign sugar, raised its price to five francs the pound; the manufacture of beet-root sugar then rose in France, and he gave it great support, but failed to naturalize it. Say observes that it subsequently naturalized itself, and he even thought there were some advantages attending its cultivation, at least locally. It is however very remarkable, that notwithstanding the apparent success of the beet-root sugar for several years, and the great cost at which the French had established it, we find them now about to make another great sacrifice of capital, to substitute cheaper sugar from their colonies in its place. This is a strong proof of the disadvantage they have found from it on the whole.

A great stagnation in our commerce was occasioned by Napoleon's endeavours to exclude us from every port, to which his power could reach, but the measures taken in consequence, by the English government, were thought to have increased the mischief to our own trade†.

William III. promised his Parliament, as an act of parental kindness to England, to do all in his

* M'Culloch's *Dictionary of Commerce*, art. Bordeaux.

† The measures alluded to are Napoleon's Berlin and Milan Decrees, and the English Orders in Council.

power to destroy the woollen trade of the Irish. It would have been better to have bought their cheap woollens, and repaid them with some commodities they wanted; both countries would have been enriched.

The bankruptcies with their attendant distresses, occasioned at different times by the derangements in our currency, are within our own memories. It is true that great difference of opinion exists, as to the really operating causes during those crises; but that does not affect the validity of the present argument, since, whatever the train of circumstances which led to our monetary embarrassments, it is equally evident they did not arise from anything inherent in manufactures or trade, but from mistaken legislation, or some other external force. Neither in these, nor in any of the preceding cases which have been given as instances, do the miseries suffered prove anything, but the evils that may arise from war, from passion, or from impolicy; no necessary connexion is established between them and manufacturing industry.

A sudden cessation of demand for some commodity occasionally occurs, and is a calamity which there are no means of controlling; but the more firmly a production rests on its natural suitableness to the soil, and to the habits of the people, the less risk there will be of the trade passing away into other channels; on the other hand, the more it is forced by artificial or legislative measures, the greater that danger will be. Barilla is an alkali required in large quantities for several of our most

important manufactures. It is obtained from plants growing by the sea-side, and the best sort grows at Alicant in Spain; it can also be extracted from salt. The obstructions to trade occasioned by the war, but still more the heavy taxes laid upon those two commodities, barilla and salt, raised their price very high. This led to the making of kelp, an inferior alkali, which is produced from marine plants growing on the shores of Scotland and its adjacent islands*. It is calculated that 20,000 tons were made annually. The price rose occasionally to 20*l.* the ton; and the kelp-shores of one island let for 7000*l.* a year. This casualty was a fortune while it lasted, both to the proprietors and the peasantry; but it could only have been maintained by continuing two taxes most injurious and oppressive to the industrious classes of the whole empire, as salt and alkali enter into the production and preservation of many of the prime necessaries of life; and to make the inferior alkali answer several of the purposes of barilla, it must undergo a very expensive process. The duty on those commodities was unavoidably repealed after the peace, and "the manufacture of kelp has in consequence become almost extinct." "Shores that formerly yielded the proprietors a rent of from 200*l.* to 500*l.* a year, are now worth nothing. The price of kelp, since the year 1822, has been at an average about 4*l.* a ton, but it is daily declining, and will soon cease to be produced." Both the proprietors and the peasantry are, in this case, much to be pitied. The reader may still see

* M'Culloch's *Dict.*, art. Barilla.

occasional accounts in the newspapers of the misery of the poor people. Subscriptions for their relief can, however, be of no further benefit than to rescue them from absolute famine, unless some steps be taken either to bring employment to them, or take them where employment can be procured. The temporary prosperity must have had the effect of increasing their numbers, beyond what the ordinary labour of so poor a district would require; a consequence easy to have been foreseen, as well as the uncertain foundation of the wealth. "The proprietors," observes Mr. M'Culloch, "had not a vestige of ground for considering that their accidental advantage could be permanent;" which may be perfectly true, but they are not the less deserving of commiseration. No doubt there were, at the time of the kelp-trade, informed persons who understood the dependence of its prosperity upon circumstances that must cease; but a knowledge of the sources of wealth or prosperity, and the laws that must govern them, made no part of a gentleman's education. It is but recently that such studies have been introduced into the colleges and universities, and unfortunately this knowledge, which the complicated condition of society now renders so necessary, is still extremely deficient in general, and the desire of proving that whatever they themselves do not know is either useless or ridiculous, tempts many to sneer at it. It is not to be supposed that every one could be so educated, as to judge personally of the causes and consequences of every event, that takes place in the commercial or political world, but it is assuredly

desirable that they who have great power in their hands, should have such knowledge of general principles, as should lead them to seek for the causes, and probable consequences, of every remarkable change they saw taking place in their own circumstances, or those of their tenantry and dependants; no otherwise can they act with a prudent and benevolent regard to the future. But persons, not acquainted even with first principles, are more apt to despise the suggestions of the informed, than to adopt them; sometimes they do not feel the force of the arguments addressed to them, and sometimes they have too little decision of character to act on what they admit. The proper advantage to derive from temporary profits is, to accumulate part of them as capital; it is a duty to instruct the ignorant labourers in the necessity of similar prudence, and to endeavour to have some plan in view, for assisting them to find other employments, when the necessity for such shall arise.

This illustration has been selected as rather a striking one in itself, and because it draws attention to the fact, that agricultural employments are not exempt from those severe fluctuations attributed to manufactures. It might perhaps be contended, that the dense population created by manufactures, increases the sufferings brought on society by the unavoidable fluctuations in trade, resulting from want of foresight and knowledge, from impolicy, war, and violence; but the experience of all times and countries has proved, that commerce and manufactures quicken the progress of knowledge, and their spirit

is directly opposed to war and violence. Countries that are purely agricultural are backward almost in everything, that most promotes human prosperity. To judge of the real spirit arising from commerce, the reader is requested to read the report of the Dutch merchants on the state of their country*, about the middle of the last century. He may there observe, whether any code of principles equally favourable to human happiness ever sprung from a nation of shepherds, of agriculturists, or of knights; it will show him what wisdom men, (neither more intelligent nor more generous than other nations,) will learn, when left to take their instructions from the nature of things, instead of being taught to rely on partial protection, and look no further for the causes of their condition than to acts of parliament.

The preceding observations will, it is hoped, be sufficient to prevent those, who are willing to attend to such subjects, from confusing the real conditions of manufacturing industry, with evils arising from external causes. We can only judge soundly of any condition, by knowing the real sources of its sufferings, and what capabilities of happiness it possesses; otherwise benevolence will be wasted on useless schemes, or suffered to die away from the notion that there is nothing to be done. Much information could not be conveyed in a work such as the present, but the spirit to seek for it may perhaps be imparted, and the manner in which to arrive at true and practical opinions, may be usefully indicated. It is a melancholy thing to see a subject so important and

* See Note K. at the end of the volume.

so full of danger treated with invective, in tales and essays whose chief purpose is to kindle emotion; sometimes made an engine of party; and seldom investigated with a sufficient sense of the complicated interests at stake, and the danger of disseminating error, or awakening passion on the subject.

Our manufactures have been called "a wen, a fungous excrescence, the growth of which might have been checked, if its consequences had been apprehended in time; but now it has acquired so great a bulk, its nerves have branched so widely, and the vessels of the tumour are so inosculated into some of the veins and arteries of the natural system, that to remove it by absorption is impossible, and excision would be fatal." On this side of the question too is another class of declaimers, persons who, active and generous in their own transactions, are, however, so fond of excitement, that they hear of a wrong, as a hunter does of a fox; we do them anything but a service, by assuring them the mischievous animal has been already destroyed. When we find them on the point, as we think, of a brain-fever for the wrongs of their fellow-creatures, we perceive, to our amazement, that proving things are not so bad, that the worst were not true, and the rest in the way of amendment, only makes them ten times more violent than they were. "No elopement after all!" cries the disappointed Lydia Languish, when every one consents to her marriage, and so cries the disappointed philanthropist, "No grievance after all!"

On the opposite side, are the cool and sagacious

in avoiding everything that can involve them in personal exertion, or give them uneasy emotions. These persons seize hold of some general maxim, with which, like the long pole of the Alpine traveller, they vault over every difficulty: "It is very dangerous to meddle with trade." "There is no condition without its evils." "This is a party business." With such salvoes to their conscience they oppose, not only rash and ill-considered legislation, but even inquiry. Such is not the spirit with which to approach the cause of the defenceless, the poor and the ignorant, the child, the woman, and the slave. But the last assistance to call in for their aid, are the random suggestions of passion. Policy that is vindictive, rather than sanatory, will do no good to those who, under any system of law, must always depend in their daily transactions, very much on the temper and conscience of their masters.

Happily this active country contains minds of a higher order, than either the passionate, or the interested; and if any suggestions hereby thrown out, should happen to awaken their sympathy and direct their researches, it will surely be a small matter to bear the reproach of having betrayed too little knowledge and ability, to do justice to so deserving a subject.

Section V.

Digression on the Sources of Happiness.

Before we proceed to examine the condition of the manufacturer, it will not be time misspent, to inquire into the real elements of happiness. If we

would judge correctly of a condition so different from our own, it is expedient to consider first, what circumstances we should look to. We are all more or less misled by our own particular habits of life and thought. It may appear, perhaps, that an average share of enjoyment is to be found in circumstances, where we should not immediately have been led to expect it; and that it is much wanting in others, where the possession of certain advantages leads us to censure discontent and misconduct with asperity.

Happiness and comfort are but vaguely guessed at, from considering the outward condition. Differences in climate and habits produce such extreme diversity of desires and tastes, that the satisfaction or discontent of one person is seldom a measure for that of others. It is only certain things that are equally essential to every one; in all other respects, we may find one people ready to rise in rebellion for privations, under which others will be found contented and cheerful. Let us reflect on the appalling hardships and dangers endured in journeys and voyages of discovery, and ask what it is, that makes the adventurers who have encountered them once, so often desirous to risk them again? it is not that the extremities of hunger and thirst, of heat and cold, the fever of the swamp, the exhaustion of the monotonous march, the labours of exploring the untrodden mountain, the tedium of the ice-locked ship, and the danger from the storm, the savage, and the wild beast, are not felt, but that some passion or desire of the soul has found gratification, which has more than compensated for all those sufferings. We may guess

at the extent of the enjoyment, by the sufferings that are encountered for its sake.

To judge where happiness may be found, and how to promote it, we must look beyond those circumstances over which habit has influence, and which vary in every condition of life; we must seek for the inherent wants and desires, which none are without, who are not born deficient in the attributes of our nature. The gratification of these natural desires and affections is sought for, under every diversity of condition; they are the foundation of happiness. Habit may give relish to the coarsest fare, or produce indifference to the best, but it cannot destroy the desire for nutriment. The pursuits and occupations in which men learn to take interest are exceedingly different; but some they must have; habit could render utter inaction bearable, only by producing stupidity. The affections of the heart may be trained to flow out on the most dissimilar objects: checked in one direction by artificial restraints, they find indulgence in another; but a person who should have conquered the feelings themselves, would be scarcely a human being. Hence it may be perceived, that the old adage, "A sound mind in a sound body," comprises nearly all that a definition of happiness requires; it implies the health of the body, and the health of the understanding, together with regulated passions and well-cultivated affections, as forming part of the mind. The first, the health of the body, whenever it is the usual condition, is a sufficient security that there has been no deficiency of food or other necessaries, and that the

labour has not been too much. The health of the mind is more indefinite, because its powers have not such fixed limits as those of the body. The nature of the mind is, to be actuated by a great variety of passions and desires, either innate or easily reducible to something that is so, which no human being is ever without, and which are either the vultures of the breast, or the springs of the most useful enterprises. The nature of the mind is also, to require constant occupation. As already observed, a person condemned to absolute inaction, would in process of time become stupid or mad, pursuits therefore, either very trifling, or very irregular, or such as are quite inadequate to the degree of intelligence that has been called forth, leave a man the prey to a sense of vacuity that grows intolerable; he is liable to be driven by his appetites and passions into excesses, merely to escape the tedium of existence, though the consequences of these, in the end, are much worse than the pain of resistance to indolence would have been at first*. Now it is implied in the health of the mind, not merely that a man shall be in his right senses, but that he should be able to discern his true interests, to act according to his convictions, and so to control and regulate his passions, as to turn them to the uses and benefits for which they were given to the creature. But this is the effect of good religion

* People are apt to suppose it is the excess of men's passions, and the greatness of the pleasures they seek, that lead them into criminal courses; but this is by no means always the case. It is often their want of self-command, which makes them yield to very slight impulses, and such as owe their chief power to the want of some better excitement.

and education, and hence it appears that he who is left without the means of acquiring these, is left deficient in that which, next to subsistence, is our greatest necessity, nor need we much scruple to add, that it were better he should want existence itself. The necessity of labour for subsistence is in a great measure a natural education, because it enforces that steady exertion which is healthful for the mind. They who can afford to be really idle are few, compared with the numbers of mankind, and they are seldom either virtuous or happy. But when we further consider, how readily most people yield to the seductions of idleness, and the many bad passions and tempers it produces, we can scarcely hesitate to acknowledge that the necessity of labour to the bulk of mankind is really a blessing, and ought not to be numbered among their evils. If it be not excessive, that is, if it be not too much for the health, or for the acquisition of mental improvement, men are repaid for the pain of resisting the desire of ease and idleness.

By comparing the effect of different occupations on the mind, we may observe that, from the most severe to the most trifling, the more nearly the object or purpose of our labour is connected with the labour itself, the less irksome the latter becomes. There is a pleasure in seeing a result, or finishing, though we have instantly to begin again; we usually grow impatient of operations that are long and uniform, before we see any effect; but if *three* or *four* articles can be finished, though they take the same time and require the same labour, the work is more interesting. The

ultimate end or object of our labour, is always something agreeable, we labour either for some object solidly useful to ourselves or others, or for mere pleasure or amusement. In the first case, though the ultimate object is usually maintenance, the most really interesting of any, yet the labours themselves are often tedious and uniform operations, attended with little of the interest above suggested; for the immediate result of the labour may be merely so many feet of ditching, or so many yards of weaving, or any similar routine matter. In the pursuits that are followed for mere amusement or pleasure, the labours which they require are usually connected immediately with their object, and are therefore more agreeable: such are, the construction of implements to be applied to immediate convenience or amusement; the labour and fatigue of travelling, or the walks of the botanist or geologist. But mere amusements supply no permanent occupation; and in general, it is only the remote and long-laboured object, or the duty that comes with its daily necessity and its daily reward, that preserves the health and vigour of the mind. It may truly be said, that the shorter and easier the efforts that lead to enjoyment, the sooner do satiety and the sense of vacuity return.

If the remark apply but little to the researches, above instanced, of the botanist or geologist, it is because they are but steps of a sustained and continuous pursuit. They are classed as amusements, only because they are here assumed to have been taken up with no other views; but they approach to the nature of business; and the more amusements

partake of that useful character, the more lasting they are. This is never the case with trifles: when the enjoyment is over, they leave little or nothing in the mind. They are not steps to something else; they have no connexion with other and further results, to be brought out by further endeavours. The attempt to make life a series of quickly-succeeding emotions, will ever prove a miserable failure; whereas when the chief part of our time is spent in labour, active power increases, the exertion of it becomes habit, the mind gathers strength; and emotion being husbanded retains its freshness, and the spirits preserve their alacrity through life. It follows that the most agreeable labours are those which superadd, to an object of important and lasting interest, a due mixture of intermediate and somewhat diversified results; to a mechanic, making a set of chairs and tables, for example, is more agreeable than working daily at a saw-pit. But nothing can deprive the industrious man (however undiversified his employment) of the advantage of having a constant and important pursuit: viz., earning the necessaries and comforts of life; and when we consider the uneasiness of a life without any steady pursuit, and how slight is the influence that such as are merely voluntary have over most men, it seems certain that, as a general rule, we do not err in representing the *necessity* of labour as a safeguard of happiness.

On the social affections, it is not necessary to say much, since the circumstances that promote or impair them, are felt nearly alike in every condition of life. I shall only add that, under this head, are in-

cluded the pleasures of social intercourse generally, as well as family affections and private friendships. In all ranks of society, there are professions and duties which interfere very much with the cultivation of this great class of pleasures, but not more in the working classes than in the higher orders: I am inclined to think rather less, for they are usually thrown more together, and are less fastidious in their tastes. There are, however, so few situations in which there are not some opportunities of enjoying these blessings, that it may be said, the impediments to them arise, upon the whole, more from vice and temper than position.

To me it appears, that to one or other of the foregoing sources every essential requisite of happiness may be referred. It is to these we are to look, in endeavouring to judge of the effect of men's situation and employments upon their well-being. It is certainly true, that we may be cruelly wronged and afflicted, though still left in possession of subsistence and health, occupation and friends, and though our passions and desires should not be criminal; but the only object of these observations, is to ascertain the common elements essential to human welfare in every condition, and which it should be our endeavour to provide, as far as possible, for all classes. These are the foundations, which, when secured, afford men much the same chances of happiness in one mode of life as another; for in all, people are liable to have their hopes and their passions frustrated, and their feelings wounded by their peculiar and personal circumstances. If there be any difference, they are rather more exposed

to such sufferings in the higher than in the lower conditions; for the more the imagination is excited, the more eager and aspiring do their wishes become. As the air expands when the superincumbent pressure is removed, so do our desires, when the restraints on their indulgence are withdrawn. This law of our nature, which exposes us to some sufferings (to many, when the due cultivation of reason is neglected,) is however the main-spring, that raises the human being from a low and animal condition: they, in whom oppression or slavish education has destroyed this elasticity of mind, have lost the great stimulant to exertion, but the systematic occupation, that prevents us from brooding over our hopes and desires till they swell into improbabilities, or break out into freaks, is one of the best securities for the happiness of the many, whatever their station.

Section VI.

Evils attendant on some Branches of Industry (resumed).

That much of the misery which overspreads our manufacturing population proceeds from their employments, is no proof that it cannot be diminished. The maxim that while a cause remains, so must its effects, supposes the subject affected by such cause to remain unaltered: but the subject at present is man, and over him and his productions we have power. If we shift our sail, the wind carries us, not where it blows, but where we will. Torrents that

spread swamp and miasmata for ages, have been forced by modern skill to discharge their foul waters, so as to create a still rising soil of successive and rich deposits*. In like manner, may knowledge and skill oppose correctives to degradation and misery, which it should appal us to think of, but much more should it appal us not to think of them, while there is a hope of their remedy. Already the improvements in machinery and management have removed many inconveniences, and we know not how much farther such improvements may be carried. At present, the effects of the employments are often increased by intemperance and want of precaution on the part of the workmen; and these aggravations, we ought not to despair of controlling. It is surely better to approach this subject, with a strong persuasion that a great deal may be done by education, combined with other means; for the angry compassion of those who assume that depravity, disease, and oppression are inseparable from manufactures, can rarely produce any effect but declamation.

The knowledge and benevolence displayed by many of the master manufacturers, have produced some striking proofs of the excellent condition to which the people might be brought; but a great change must take place before such examples become general. It is inherent in the very nature of manufacturing industry, that fluctuations of employment should occur, from the impossibility of adjusting the supply accurately to the demand. This occasions alternate periods of very high and very low wages;

* In Tuscany.

at present these are attended, the first, by excess with its brutal intemperance, the last, by want with its horrors. A brisk demand sets every one to work, there is a competition for hands, and wages rise high: too much is produced at once, the market is everywhere overstocked, and a period of stagnation ensues till the supply is exhausted. Another reason for these fluctuations is, that the demands of society cannot be supposed always equable: a bad harvest, for instance, which absorbs more of men's means in the purchase of food, leaves them less to expend on manufactures*. It seems scarcely imaginable that manufacturing industry should be ever exempt from such alternations.

These periodical or temporary fluctuations in employment, which are now productive of misery, might be converted to great benefits. If (as frequently happens) the annual average of wages were at a fair rate, habits of forethought and economy might make the high wages of the busy period supply the deficiency of the other. Such habits might be instilled by education, especially by instruction addressed to adults; and if this were done, the present disastrous intervals of total cessation from employment, might become a powerful corrective to the evils of overwork, and of unhealthy occupations. The leisure thus possessed would give opportunities for the most valuable species of education, that of adults: moral tastes and feelings might be awakened, and

* The above causes of alternations are not identical—the first, being miscalculation of the *supply*, the last, irregularity of *demand*.

useful knowledge might be communicated to the people, expressly directed to the immediate and local circumstances of each neighbourhood. Among the educated classes there are a great many persons capable of giving lectures, and arranging courses of such useful and agreeable instruction, as would convince the people of the necessity of moral conduct to personal and social prosperity. The way to render anything interesting is to explain its uses: this is as true of morals as of other subjects; but to render conviction practical, the application of the general rule to the existing habits of the people should be pointed out, and the best means of altering their habits, when necessary, should be suggested. Whether instruction be directed simply to moral conduct, or (as it frequently ought) to the management of their affairs, we must never assume that the ignorant will of themselves know how to apply what they learn. Other great advantages might be drawn from the intervals of leisure left by temporary want of work. They might supply opportunities for improving by various economical arts, the domestic comforts of the people, whose houses at present are said to be neglected, ill furnished, and dirty; there might then be time for the best and most humanizing enjoyments in the cultivation of social and family affections, and for recreations without beer-houses and gin-palaces. There are not many points upon which popular teachers and moralists exhibit less reflection, than on the moral effects of recreation. Belonging generally to the upper or middle classes, their attention is too much absorbed by the evils of

excess in amusement; but on the other side, they forget that too little tends to render men gloomy, unsympathetic, and stern; and the tendency of the vices of such men will be towards selfishness, sensuality, and ferocity. A great impediment in the way of present improvement in any respect, is the actual existence of a deeply-corrupted generation; but among hundreds of thousands all are not alike, and a young race is ever springing up.

Hitherto we have been adverting only to periodical fluctuations of employment in manufacturing industry; but men may be totally thrown out of work, either by the demand for some production ceasing altogether, or by improvements in machinery. A cessation of demand might be classed with the calamities that are extrinsic to trade itself, if it arose from some injudicious tax, from war, or from some change in our relations with other countries; but changes of taste for things that are not in themselves very useful (a multitude of which are produced) appear quite inevitable; some instability of employment from this cause, must therefore, I think, be enumerated among the evils *inherent* in the condition of manufacturers. It has been calculated that when the fashion of embroidered net goes out, not less than a hundred and fifty thousand women will be thrown out of work*. Whenever the demand for some commodity ceases from this cause, that is, not from the poverty of the buyers, but from mere change of taste, the money that used to be spent upon it is laid out on something else, the demand

* Ure's *Philosophy of Manufactures.*

for which increases, and more hands are wanted. If the working classes therefore could change their employments, very little suffering would follow, but this in many cases they find impossible, as some operations depend upon manual dexterity, acquired only by long practice begun early in youth. Any one may be convinced of this fact, by trying to learn to play on the pianoforte after he is advanced in life, or even to change his handwriting. Sometimes new employment is to be found only at a distance; and to the poor, change of place is attended with great difficulties, independently of their prejudices against it*.

But most of these difficulties are very much increased, by the obtuseness of intellect which proceeds from gross ignorance. It is not merely that they who have always been confined to one narrow occupation, know nothing else; they are also incapable of learning. If some occupations absolutely require early and long practice, it is not so with all, nor with many, which ignorant and ill-educated people find impracticable, only because they will not exert their attention so as to observe anything accurately; the rigidity that prevents change of employment is often in the mind more than the muscles. A gentleman whose pursuits require it, learns a variety of mechanical arts as the occasion requires, not because he is particularly clever, but because he knows a few general principles, and has learnt to observe how things are done; this sort of skill does not make him equal to a regularly-

* See Note L. at the end of the volume.

taught workman, but it would give him the power of acquiring many more arts than an ignorant man could. Some degree of similar pliancy of mind might be given to the working classes by education, and it would considerably enlarge their opportunities of employment. Very often it is as hard to make ignorant people adopt a new practice that is easier than the old one, as it is to make them learn what is more difficult; sometimes they look on with stupid amazement at the ease and expedition with which work is accomplished, but return immediately to their own clumsy methods. The variety which exists in domestic duties ought to give some of this mental pliancy to women; but never being taught in youth to attend to the reasons and uses of things, they go on like machines, and seldom profit by experience. The education of the working classes should accustom children to observe accurately, and to reason correctly on the simple subjects which they are employed about. Manual operations are very useful, the eye gives the clearest ideas, the relations between such ideas will therefore be strongly conceived, and that is the foundation of reasoning. Children taught to observe why their attempts succeed and why they fail, will learn to attach right causes and consequences together. It is desirable to turn both their minds and their hands to various things, not to make them masters of several arts, (which would scarcely be possible,) but to teach them to apply their reason and attention to more than one subject.

Improvements in machinery also occasion loss of employment: operations exploded for more expedi-

tious and economical methods, are exploded for ever, and they who can do nothing else are thrown out of bread. If these outcasts could be provided for by other employments, no one would question the advantage of having the severest labour performed by machinery. The distress of the hand-loom weavers on the introduction of the power-loom was dreadful*. It is remarkable, that the factories would have employed them all at very good wages, if they could have changed their habits; but many would not even try to do so, and to others the mere regularity was intolerable. Even in the case of new machinery, improvements which at first throw people out of employment, tend ultimately to employ more; for the cheapness with which commodities can be produced tends to create a new demand. Every form of instruction that enables men to turn their industry to more than one very limited operation, and that lessens their prejudice against change of employment, assists to lessen the number of sufferers. As workmen are sometimes deficient in one part of the country, while there are many unemployed in another, cheap conveyance and rapid intelligence would often contribute to prevent distress, if the minds of men were so trained as to know their true interests and how to avail themselves of their opportunities. Whenever there is abundance of capital in the country, it may be assumed there is somewhere a willingness to employ labour; for capital means that fund which supports and employs

* *Factory Commissioners' Report*, part ii., Glasgow, p. 42; URE'S *Philosophy of Manufactures*.

labour, and which has been accumulated expressly for that purpose; and the owners of it would not let it remain idle, if they knew where or how to obtain the particular labour requisite for their own undertakings. Consequently, if a number of hands are found unemployed while capital abounds, it may be suspected, they are only a local accumulation in some places or trades where they are not wanted, and that, except for the impediments stated, they could be employed elsewhere.

A real superfluity of hands may however occur: there may not be capital to employ them all. Capital may have decayed, either through some calamity or by prodigal habits; or the population may have increased faster, than capital can possibly be accumulated to employ them. This proceeds from ignorance and bad habits in the people; long misery and intemperance degrade their ideas, and they become destitute of that regard to the future, which is necessary to make a civilized being. It is a great misfortune when people are content to be squalid, for both their condition and their moral character depend very much on the degree of comfort and decency they regard as essential, before they venture to marry and rear up a family. Against a degraded condition there is no real safeguard, but such education as shall make people feel the strong moral obligation of securing a provision against the common casualties of life, before they undertake the support of new-born creatures. It is not meant that the working classes are all to be capitalists, in the common acceptation of that term; even though

they have opportunities of drawing an interest from their small accumulations, yet that is not the chief use of their prudence; the necessity of their condition is, that their revenues are to arise from their labour; and the essential service of their savings is to preserve themselves secure in that condition, guarded against its inevitable casualties, and enabled to rear, educate, and put their children well forward in that way of life. If their numbers be not increasing too fast for the capital of the country, they will always be sure of a demand for their services; but when there are more people than the capital of the country can employ at the accustomed wages, the competition for employment will gradually reduce wages to the least that will support existence. The habits and ideas of the people become degraded, and when that fatal change has taken place, if from any cause wages should suddenly rise, it is almost certain they will be spent by the people, not in improving their condition, but in mere debauchery.

To explain to those who have not turned their attention to subjects of this nature, that low wages do not necessarily proceed from the hard-heartedness of wealthy employers, (either manufacturers or landlords,) a fact may be mentioned which illustrates that point, though otherwise it has no claim to notice. During one of the scarcities so frequent in Ireland, numbers of poor people were wandering about, begging for work on any terms. Two neighbouring gentlemen were at the same time making the relief of the people their chief object, and, each taking his own view of what was best to be done,

followed opposite systems. The one, strongly impressed with the evils of the low rate of wages customary at all times in Ireland, regarded it as a cruelty now to take advantage of the general calamity, to make the poor man work for less than usual; he therefore resisted as much as he could all reduction of wages, and put as many men to work upon his land at the usual rate, as he could afford by the most generous exertions to maintain during the pressure; but as it was impossible to maintain the same number at a shilling per day, as at sixpence or fourpence, many were of necessity sent away. The other employed every poor creature who came, at the least he would take, for he said, "anything is better than starving; they who are willing to make the greatest exertions are those whose want is greatest; and what are they to do, who are imploring permission to earn a meal for themselves and their families, if they are refused altogether, in order to enable a smaller number to live as well as if there were no deficiency?"

Nothing could be better than the feeling on both sides; but if every one had acted on the principle of the former, many people must have perished of absolute famine. In this case, the cause of the competition for work was deficient food; but that makes no difference, the same thing will occur when there is deficient employment. This instance has been chosen, because the question of wages is here exhibited, solely in its relation to the number of labourers and the fund that was to support them, without any regard to the interests of their em-

ployers. These gentlemen were men of fortune; the profit they could make of the work was of no further consideration to them, than as it diminished their loss by bringing them some small return for their money. But in the case of trade this cannot be; the capitalist must live by his profits, and the employment given must be for the interest of both parties.

When distress proceeds really from the disproportion between the numbers of the people, and the food or capital of the country, there is no effectual remedy except increasing the food or the capital, or removing the people to some place where there is a demand for labour, and where food can be raised in abundance*. No plans of relief that, instead of creating new riches for the maintenance of new numbers, only divide differently what already exist, will be permanently beneficial. Of this sort are charitable subscriptions, for however necessary these may be to meet an exigency, yet they cannot create new funds; they can only make a new distribution of the old. Neither will attempting to put the ignorant, the improvident, and the intemperate on a footing with the frugal and moral, end in anything but failure or positive mischief.

Section VII.

Bodily Health.

The most important of all circumstances relating to the manufacturers' condition, is the effect of his employment upon his health. It is evident, that

* See Note M. at the end of the volume.

conclusive judgments upon this subject could have no weight, except from a medical person, whose attention had been long and earnestly directed to it; but no such specific knowledge is required for the present purpose; it is sufficient that disease and ill health exist to a great degree, that much is remediable, and that ills which cannot be wholly averted may be very much palliated. These are positions which I believe cannot be denied; and they who reside within reach of the manufacturing districts—but they above all, who are connected with this form of industry, and draw their prosperity from its labours—are called on by every feeling of humanity, and every duty a Christian acknowledges, to direct their utmost attention and effort to this subject. Our first consideration will relate to the ill health that is owing to poverty and vice, which have nearly the same effects everywhere, in order to separate it from that which arises from the nature of manufacturing employments: we may next endeavour to clear real evils, from those exaggerations and prejudices, which only substitute declamation in place of practical conviction.

The most *general* causes of ill health, says Dr. Arnott, are bad ventilation, cold, deficient or bad food, excess, want of exercise mental or bodily, and overwork. *Peculiar* diseases are produced by the poisonous quality of many substances used in the arts, and which are inhaled, or taken in through the skin; by the flue or dust arising from cotton, flax, and other materials; by the bent or constrained postures which some occupations require; and by close and

long-continued mental application, sometimes to minute objects, by which the sight (as well as the general health) is endangered. It is so much the nature of the human constitution to adapt itself to a great variety of circumstances, that health is not always injured by things which at first view would generally be fixed on as dangerous; others again are invariably hurtful. There is scarcely a trade or manufacture to be named which, in some of its processes, has not its peculiar and attendant disease, or its impending accidents. Dreadful as this sounds, it is, however, no more than may be said of every other profession, every mode of life, every climate, and as certainly of idleness as of any form of labour. As the shadow follows the body, so do the footsteps of death follow man through every winding that he takes in pursuit of life and prosperity; and yet after all, health is the rule, and sickness the exception; for neither is disease always mortal, nor always continuous, nor always acutely painful; nor does it always leave infirmities that impair the powers of enjoyment and action, when the attack has subsided; and it is only in such extreme cases that imperfect health is a source of much misery. In estimating the condition of the people, health is the first thing to consider; it is the first requisite of happiness; and where it is generally good, it implies the possession of nearly every other essential to physical well-being. But it is important not to mislead our judgment, by supposing that every avocation, said not to be healthy, is habitually and incurably miserable. The injury to the health of the soldier from damps and marshes, bad barracks, and

excessive exposure to weather, is usually deemed worse than his risks in the field. The climate of India is extremely inimical to the constitution of many who go out there for a livelihood; the navy is so rude a trial to the strength, independent of its perils, that few but the robust are fit for that profession; the agricultural population are very liable to acute diseases from exposure to cold, and labour in unhealthy places; studious pursuits are far from healthy; lawyers, clerks, and other persons whose business confines them to desks or crowded courts, often carry on their professions in a continual struggle with its effects upon their health.

But to persons of ordinary strength of constitution, none of those dangers are held to be any objection to accepting the employments; the advantages they hold out are a compensation for their risks and their sufferings; many of these can be warded off by prudence and temperance; and the same is assuredly true in the greater number of manufacturing employments. When otherwise, when certain trades cannot be followed without grievous detriment to the health, the strongest of all cases is made out for the utility of such occasional and total cessation from them, as the fluctuations of employment so often necessitate. There cannot be a more direct claim on the benevolence, I might say, the justice and conscience of the affluent classes, than what springs from the condition of men, reduced by the terrors of want to accept the dire alternative of a broken constitution and early decrepitude. Their labours are neces-

sary to the well-being of society; and if anything can give one class a claim upon others, it is surely that combination of circumstances. But it is less by gratuitous support, (though that may sometimes be requisite), than by education and other means, that effective relief can be given. No pains should be spared, to discover and enforce the observance of the best preventives against the effects of dangerous processes: skill and science have already obviated some very great evils to the working people, and there can be no doubt that much more may be done, if it be made the interest of men to turn their invention to the purpose. It is well known that Sir Humphry Davy's safety lamp has saved the lives of miners to a great extent. The introduction of the ventilating fan carries off the flue, which in cotton mills used to thicken the air, and cause a great deal of disease; a further effect of this ventilation, is said to be a high state of health*. A magnetic mask collects the minute particles of iron, which used to enter the eyes and pores of needle-makers. In the modern mills, improved construction has prevented the necessity of constrained postures, which in several cases produced disease; and the progress of invention is daily taking dangerous and laborious processes from human hands, to be executed by machinery. Even in employments, which must evidently be injurious in every case, such as exposure to noxious vapours, it must be impossible to ascertain the degree of their mischief, till better habits have removed aggravating causes. The danger of an unhealthy occupation is now encountered by

* *Report of Inspectors of Factories.* Rickards, Aug. 1834.

constitutions enfeebled by want of care in infancy, from the neglect and ignorance of mothers; and, in after life, injured by bad food and gross intemperance. The people are often in receipt of wages that would supply them with good food and comfort; but through their improvidence, their bad management, and their vanities, they waste their resources in theworst manner. Overwork is doubly injurious when the occupation itself is hurtful, and the necessity for this is often brought on and always increased by want of frugality. The habitations in which the people live, crowded together in dirt, damp, and bad air, are sources of disease, though no other existed. There are no drains, no pavements, and no supplies of water. There is not within reach of the town of Manchester, a single spot where the people can walk, or take any exercise. Every field, every pathway, is rigidly closed! That it would *now* be unsafe to admit these victims of corrupted civilization, to the sunny banks and fresh fields of a happier class, I can easily believe, but are there no other ways to restrain their dangerous habits and unfriendly dispositions, than brick walls and iron bars?

From the most recent accounts, it is satisfactory to learn that the zealous and persevering labour of the Factory Inspectors has so far succeeded, that now there are few mills that are not well ventilated and warmed; and as far as the influence of place is concerned, they are the most healthy that the poor can work in, being dry, warm, airy, and not crowded. Night-work may be considered as wholly abolished; and the system of working by relays of children has

been forced through all opposition; it is very generally adopted, and the mill-owners acknowledge, that they derive benefit themselves from the better health and better conduct of the children. These are extensive and important improvements, but they will fail to tell as they ought upon the health of the people, until the causes of disease and moral degradation arising from their dwellings and habits are removed. The people cannot build houses for themselves; they cannot pave, drain, and ventilate quarters of a great and wealthy town, left in the disgraceful condition above mentioned; they cannot purchase ground for air and exercise, where they might sometimes recruit their strength, and renovate their exhausted spirits; nothing is left to them but the gin-shop.

Mining appears to combine every evil which can accompany hard labour—noxious vapours, severe and frequent accidents, such excessive toil, that the frame cannot endure it for more than five days in the week, and then (in some of its processes) for not more than seven or eight hours in the day; there is the greatest fluctuation in wages; even the average rate is low, and employment is very uncertain. The principal disease to which colliers are liable is asthma, brought on by the air of the pits. They either die or are superannuated at forty-five, or below it; it is only very robust constitutions, whose working years exceed that age. The severe or fatal accidents which occur, are calculated at twenty-five per cent., in a term of thirty years, that is, twenty-five men out of every hundred are either killed or

disabled in the course of that period; minor and curable accidents are calculated at ninety per cent.

It is thought the premature decay of the miner is owing at least as much to intemperance, as to the deleterious description of the labour.

"The character of the miner is like that of the sailor, greedy of present enjoyment and careless of the future. The very scenes they live in contribute to this feeling, and the maxim they act upon is, unhappily, 'Let us eat and drink to-day, for to-morrow we die.' The following extracts from an address to them on the severe distresses of 1816, by a magistrate who lived in the centre of them, is a melancholy but true description of their habits: 'When work and money were to be had, and you were, in comparison, in a state of prosperity, did you use and enjoy those blessings with moderation, sobriety, and thankfulness? When I mention drunkenness, do I not mention a sin most common, not only among men, but almost among children? What scenes of revelling and debauchery, of gambling, and even fighting, might be witnessed after every reckoning, and even on the Lord's day itself! But this is not all. Remember the pride of many: they would work when they pleased, and play when they pleased; and often refused to work when wanted to do it, to the great injury of their masters and trade in general. Recollect the extravagance, the luxury, the self-indulgence of numbers. While the men besot themselves with ale, the women privately indulge in the gin bottle. By how many were

almost the whole earnings of a fortnight eaten and drunk in two or three days! Some who are now going to the parish for relief would give any price in the market for poultry, or what they had a fancy to, and even professed not to care for a pound or two to have a single dress a little finer, or 'more tasty,' as they say, than ordinary*.'"

Against minor and curable accidents the men have amongst themselves a sort of benefit clubs, by subscribing to which they ensure attendance and support during such casualties. They have lasted and answered well. The surgeon who attended one of them, being asked whether the nature of the work required strong stimulants, replied, "Certainly not;" and that, in fact, the men during work usually drank tea; but after their payments, which are once a fortnight, they remain for days together at the beer shop. Their habit is to give their families a small allowance out of their wages, and spend the rest on their own brutal indulgences; hence high wages, when they get them, only add to their depravity, and contribute nothing to the welfare of their families. Mining is to be classed with agricultural, not with manufacturing labour; but the moral and physical evils are of the same nature in both, though their worst extreme may possibly be found in the condition of the miner. Dreadful as the picture is, the true amount of the injury to health inseparable from the employment, cannot be fairly

* DAY'S *Report; Second Annual Report of Poor Law Commissioners.*

judged of, till separated from its combination with gross intemperance and alternate want, furious passions, and the dirt and discomfort of the drunkard's house. Neither let us assume that changes are impossible. That stimulant to improvidence and disregard of character, the old poor law, is removed, and the law of nature, which places the terrors of penury and disgrace in array against habitual debauchery, is no longer expressly abrogated by legal enactments; the temptations to vice are at least left to their own unassisted force, and if in most cases, the corruption of the old will be too deep for correction, this cannot be the case with the rising generation. Too true it is, that the sins of the fathers taint the constitutions, both physical and moral, of the children; but in each generation the taint becomes weaker and weaker, and at last may wear out.

After having devoted our attention so far to the causes of disease, vice, and suffering, we discover that they are sometimes very much promoted or repressed by circumstances within control, but concerning which no popular clamour has ever spent its short-lived vehemence. The improvement of the habitations of the poor, would be one of the best points to which attention and money could be directed. A closely crowded habitation is a compendious expression for bad health, dirt, debased sentiments, indecorum, dissension, and often drunkenness; it is also nearly incompatible with economy: nothing can be provided in due season when at the lowest price, because nothing can be kept safe, and

no domestic arts can be carried on for want of room and convenience.

On the subject of health there is great satisfaction in finding an author, who had himself been a workman, express his belief that in manufactures there is hardly any employment, which is not compatible with the enjoyment of tolerable health, when exercised subject to temperance and regularity, with a due regard to the wholesomeness of the diet, to the hours of meals, and to the quantity of labour that the frame can bear; all which circumstances he treats throughout, as within the power of the masters and men to regulate, without injury to trade*.

Section VIII.

Health of Mind.

No attention to the health and comfort of the working people will be effectual without their own discretion. Intemperance, waste, and ignorance, will destroy the sources of health and happiness, faster than any hand can replenish them. It is in vain to guard against external ills, while in the man himself early corruption is suffered, age after age, almost to preclude the existence of the moral sense, and gross ignorance leaves him incapable of rational conduct. There is no substitute for early education, not merely directed to the rudiments of learning, but calculated to awaken the kindly feelings, and to form good habits—habits of order and cleanliness, of attention, of using reason, and of piety and cheerfulness,

* Wade's *History of the Middle Classes.*

two things that should not be separated. This should be followed up by instruction to the adults, conveyed both orally and by well-written books, and of such a nature as should give them just views of the real interests of the working classes, and of their duties as citizens. It should aim at impressing them with the importance of frugality and foresight; and not disdain descending even to minute detail, in teaching them how to apply their principles to practice. It would be very desirable to spread among them, such knowledge of a scientific and economical description, as would be practically useful to them in the management of the particular business of each. There is an art in rendering instruction agreeable and interesting, and a few benevolent persons possessed of this, might withdraw the minds of the women from their miserable tawdry tastes and wasteful vanities, and lead them to form a better estimate of the requisites to a comfortable and respectable condition.

Some people will declare against such knowledge as is here proposed; they will regard it as unattainable, or as out of character. But addressed, as above suggested, to adults, it is neither much, nor so difficult as other things, which the working classes must very often learn in different branches of the arts and manufactures. It is so far from being out of character, that a man who does not know, or cannot practise, what will save him from ruin and preserve him in comfort, is worse off than a brute that is guided by instinct. We who derive wealth, leisure, knowledge and refinement from civilization, owe it to the others as a debt, and to God as a duty, not to leave

them untaught how to move safely through the intricate relations of society, like men going blindfold through burning plough-shares. The laws of Providence have affixed penalties to the neglect of our fellow-creatures, which will overtake us at last if we do nothing, or nothing sufficient; and if we suffer men to be fiends, by the works of fiends we shall perish. Is it a Christian duty to serve our fellow-creatures in whatever way they need it most, or are these words without meaning—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink," &c.? or are we bound in truth and singleness of heart, to interpret the hungry man, and the sick, and the prisoner, as types of all mankind? And if we are, must we not add, "I was ignorant and ye taught me not, blind and ye let me fall into the pit, sinful and ye left temptation to beset my path?" It is hard to behold the vices and woes of mankind, and to keep from words of reproach to those who would turn the hands of the benevolent from giving education—who think their own abstruse interpretations and subtle comments of more importance to salvation, than to withdraw men from idleness and intemperance, to render them moral and orderly, observers of good faith, kind-hearted and provident. But these ill-judging counsellors tell us that the education proposed, would leave out the right principle that alone sanctifies moral conduct; I shall not stop to combat this assertion, beyond denying its correctness; for there is no principle of exclusion belonging to the system suggested. I would simply ask who hinders, or desires to hinder *them* from

superadding the principles, which they assume we leave out? is it proposed to shut the doors of the schools, or the cottages, or the factories, against them? do we warn the people against attending their lectures, or their teachings, or against entering their churches, their chapels, or other places of worship? which is most likely to listen efficaciously to religious exhortations, the man who has been trained to humanity and sobriety, or the habitual sot, the ruffian, the incendiary? Surely those teachers believe the doctrines they are so anxious to implant in the minds of the community. Do they then hold, that the truth of them will be less convincing to those, who have learned to make use of their rational faculties in the common duties of life, than to stolid beings, who can scarcely attach meaning to words? Above two hundred years, the education of the people has been under the control of the Church of England—a church abounding at all times in piety, learning, and virtue, yet what are the results among the people? have they been led to sobriety, morality, and peacefulness? So far from it, that their vices, and crimes, and moral corruption, are the perpetual subject of their teachers' indignant reprobation. I neither assert nor believe that these effects have sprung from want of true desire to improve the people, or want of faithful zeal in ministering to that end; but while we have their evidence, as well as our own observation, to prove that the end has not been accomplished, can they tell us that their methods are alone sufficient, alone right? If pure motives, and good faith, and zealous action have

failed, we must suspect it is because they have been misdirected; and the less we can doubt the virtuous intentions of the instructors, the more we are compelled to question the prudence and sufficiency of their methods. Surely, then, it is not merely right, but imperative, to seek further remedies for this distempered state, "to minister to the mind diseased," "to cleanse the full bosom of the perilous stuff that weighs upon it,"—to correct vicious habits and restore the natural tone of the system, so that the heart may no longer be inaccessible to the healing power of true religion. But the time seems coming, when the right sense and good feeling of mankind will disentangle the practical truths of morality, and the hallowing doctrines of Christianity, from the illusions of imagination and the sophistries of prejudice, and will cast these latter with determination from their breasts. Early-rooted prejudice, planted by venerated hands, in some way or other overmasters us all; and on this point has obtained the sanction of men who, in other respects, would reform the face of society if their number bore any proportion to its wants; but the error sanctioned by them has so spread, that its prevalence is doing more harm, than their individual efforts can do good.

The more we examine the subject of happiness, the more we become convinced that good education is necessary to it. Everything that constitutes joy and cheerfulness consists chiefly of social, kindly, and affectionate feelings; but the education, in general given to the poorer classes, is very little calculated to draw forth those feelings, and to soften their hearts.

Nor indeed can this ever be effectually done till a new generation of parents have been brought, by their own improvement, to instil filial reverence,—the spring-head of so many virtues, the restraint upon so many vices,—into the hearts of their children. The surly insubordination with which the children of the poor so often treat their parents is shocking. If any means could be found of communicating instruction to young mothers, upon the proper training of their children's temper and habits, there are few steps that would be found more immediately useful. If there be a time when the heart of a thoughtless young woman is tender and disposed to virtue, it is when she first becomes a mother: the subject of education is interesting in itself, and it would then relate to her dearest object. Among a scattered agricultural population it would be rather difficult to collect a number of auditors together, but in towns the difficulty would be much lessened. In this manner also, a good deal of useful practical knowledge on domestic economy might be conveyed to young women, which could scarcely fail to influence the conduct of many of them.

The improvement of the women is even more essential to the well-being of the labouring classes, than that of the men, because on the woman devolves the management of the fund on which the family depends; and it is she only who can form the early habits of the children. The prudence of the wife might sometimes be defeated by the idleness of the husband, but there are many men who would be sober and domestic if they had a well-kept home

and kind tempers to return to. The supposed irksomeness of the working man's employments, cannot be properly judged of by the standard of tastes formed under very different circumstances: what is hateful to one person is indifferent or even congenial to another; so that, generally speaking, when the health is not hurt, and when the reward is adequate to the labour, the means of happiness are provided. The rest depends chiefly on those accidents of fortune or temper, to which all classes and conditions of life are equally liable, except as they can be controlled by superior prudence and moral feeling. We have seen in the Section on Habit, that however agreeable an employment may be in itself, when it comes to be practised for many hours every day, not from choice but necessity, and when the desire for rest and variety must be constantly resisted, it soon comes to be regarded merely as business, and shares the inevitable fate attendant upon continual repetition,—the sensations become blunted: the painter, the musician, the actor, the gardener, may all be detected groaning like others over the constraint of daily toil. But in the mean time the habit of action is forming, and as the power of voluntary exertion gains strength the pain which accompanies it grows less, and the motive that leads us to labour grows stronger. The most universal of all motives, the desire of subsistence, is equally powerful under every form of industry, mental or manual, undertaken for that end; and cannot be supposed less strong in the poor, than in the rich. When a man's industry can bring him the command

of comfort and enjoyments, (or what he considers such,) he hesitates little to undertake unpleasant employment; for labour that is adequately paid is seldom pursued with reluctance, whatever it be. To the poor man, the desire for comfortable diet and clothing, a good house, and the means of indulging in occasional amusement, can scarcely be thought less exciting, than the more distant rewards of ambition or wealth are to higher classes; his aims are less splendid, but they are more immediate, and their interest is always sustained by their real necessity. But if nothing more pleasant is the reward of his toil, than oblivion of care in the brutal excesses of drinking, labour will appear to him in no other light than a stern necessity: his temper will be embittered, and his hand will be armed against his neighbour.

The constant restraint, which is so disagreeable till habit has rendered it easy, is not peculiar to the working classes. An attorney, a medical man, an official person, has scarcely any time at his own disposal. These conditions all require great labour of mind and constant personal attendance, usually accompanied with anxiety, and a responsibility for which mere attention and integrity do not suffice, as they do in the case of mechanics and labourers, whose duties are definite and uniform. Notwithstanding these hard lessons to be learned by all, it is undeniable that professions and trades with their compulsory labours form, on the whole, the happier, —the free and idle, the less happy portion of society; and this is true not only of the poor, who must

want if they do not work, but of the rich; the reflecting know this, and the unthinking have it forced on their attention. "What a pity he had not a profession!" is a sentiment daily applied to persons far above want. If any one with fair ability would write honestly "the Confessions of an Idler," it might be of great value to his fellow-creatures, and the time spent in the work would perhaps be the happiest period of his life.

By the influence of habit, many also of the disagreeable concomitants of labour, which serve to colour an appeal to the passions, in reality are felt very slightly. The dirt, the damp, the cold, the heat, the gloom, the dust, the noise of the factory or workshop are in many cases not perceived, while the attention is fixed on the work: the only question is, their effect on the health; if that be uninjured they are no great evils.

It is particularly deserving of attention, that the irksomeness of labour and all its accompaniments, is extremely increased by every system, which renders the reward of the labourer independent of the goodness or badness of his workmanship. A man secure of support, however negligent, awkward, or dissolute he may be, feels the full weight of the dulness and restraint his business imposes on him: activity is pleasurable when the habit of it is formed; but in the above case, every incentive to the formation of active habits is destroyed. Attention is an active power, the exertion of it becomes easy and pleasant by practice; and whenever attention is directed to the accomplishment of a purpose, it is withdrawn from

the disagreeableness of labour: when the attention is not vigorously excited, when no desire to do the work well is called forth, the mind is left a prey to the irksome and irritating sensations of a tedious and laborious employment.

It may therefore be assumed as a maxim, that the less our business absorbs our attention, and the less the necessity for doing it well, the more grievous will be our sense of restraint. Accordingly, the greater the indecision in the mind of the workman as to whether he shall work, and what pains he shall take, the more weariness does he suffer, and the more are his feelings embittered; give him but a motive to excel, and his weariness disappears, though he does more work. Labour is no evil, except from its excess. A man who returns from his work able to enjoy with cheerfulness the comforts of home, and whose mind and feelings can expand while his limbs repose, may be assured that his lot, though a laborious one, admits of as much happiness as any other condition. When decent subsistence has been provided, the other great requisites to the enjoyment of life depend upon virtue and social affections; and these are as much within reach of the poor man as of the rich. No doubt can be entertained that the pleasures of family ties (the greatest of all), of the friendship, the conversation, and the esteem of our equals, are felt as keenly in one station as in another. But a man habitually overworked can enjoy nothing: when he leaves off his work too jaded and depressed for a cheerful emotion, the whole frame feels an irritation that prevents even sleep, or prevents it from giving

refreshment, and the desire for the stimulant of drink becomes irrisistible; can he be severely censured who yields to it? is there a heart possessed of any humanity who can be content while his fellow-creatures are in such a condition? If there be some operations, which require very long labour from the same individuals, occasional holidays or intervals of complete relaxation are the more necessary. The frugality that would enable the working classes to command such rest as nature requires, and an education that would teach them the principles that must regulate their wages and govern their condition, would effect improvements far beyond the power of legislation. This has been proved by the benevolence of the owners of some manufactories, who have devoted themselves to introducing education, order, and domestic comfort into their establishments. Those mill-owners hold out an example of active and successful beneficence, the more valuable to society, because their improvements have been accomplished (it is said) without very great sacrifice of emolument; for this circumstance proves the practicability of their system in many other cases. Where mills are ill situated, in unhealthy places, or in the worst parts of crowded towns—where the machinery is old and ill constructed, and the capital not large, equal perfection cannot be attained, but a good deal can be done everywhere by personal attention and earnest humanity: the head of a manufacturing establishment is in a position to act with great power, and a dense population facilitates the extension of education and example.

Let it not be too hastily decided, that all the corruption we see in great towns is inevitable. There will always be haunts where the depraved will congregate together, and occasionally draw in weak victims; but on the other side, the very word "civilize" and its kindred terms remind us, that general experience has long since determined, that the effect of towns, upon the whole, is to improve, not to brutalize mankind.

The science of political economy could only have sprung up after long experience had shown, in a great variety of conditions, the true causes of national prosperity. No other study leads so directly to the remedies for misery: it is closely connected with morality, and is the firmest ally to it that can be found in *human* knowledge. Every one who concerns himself with the welfare of his fellow-creatures, should be acquainted, at least with its leading doctrines; for in all such purposes we cannot take a step, without acting either on a right principle or a wrong one; that is, without risking to do mischief while we mean to do good. On many subjects of daily recurrence, we can scarcely express a sentiment or an opinion, without either fostering a prejudice that retards, or spreading ideas that promote, the good of society. That many of its questions remain still undecided, is no argument against the study, but quite the reverse; it is indeed a reason for those, who cannot go deeply into such subjects or investigate them personally, to read none but the best writers, but of those who can study them thoroughly, the greater the number who do so, the better; for the views taken

by some popular writers, admit of very dangerous misapplications; and the broken and irregular gleams in which this science now reaches the minds of the lower orders, tend often to mislead them. When people get just light enough to see ghosts, it is better to open the windows than increase their darkness; and if in the manufacturing towns, the higher orders were able and willing to disseminate the useful and established doctrines of this science among the people, it would effectually banish that imaginary opposition of interests between employers and workman, which occasions so much disunion. In a science like this, which has facts and experience to appeal to, truth can always be attained at last; disagreements between persons who can reason, serve to elicit it; whereas a controversy between the learned and the ignorant ends in mutual scorn.

If, in the mercantile and manufacturing classes, the education of the women were such as to invigorate their judgment, and give greatness to their views, they would soon begin to direct the minds of their sons, to the generous pride of dignifying their own station by its wise philanthropy and its knowledge. We should not then observe among their members, persons who, with ample fortunes, have not the education which becomes a gentleman; or others, who betray the idle vanity of endeavouring to copy the manners and habits of a class, that disdains community with them, and immediately shuns, like an infection, whatever they have adopted.

I cannot better conclude these reflections, than with

the description given by Say, of the qualities requisite in the head of a manufacturing establishment:—

"The first of all qualifications for the conduct of a mercantile, especially of a manufacturing undertaking, is a sound judgment. It is to form the judgment, that the entire education of those who are designed to direct industry should tend; and judgment springs chiefly from the knowledge of men and things. It is more essential than art itself, because the knowledge and skill of an artist may be purchased; but nothing can supply the place of that prudence and conduct, in the head of an establishment, which are nothing more than judgment brought into action. He who attaches great consequence to what can affect his success very little, and cannot appreciate that which is of the greatest importance to him, will do nothing but commit errors.

"He should be able to encounter risks, in order to secure advantages that will overbalance his loss. He should be cautious of speculations that offer unusual profits, because they generally conceal some detriment. He must be suspicious of fraud, without ever betraying that he is so; he must make the interests of his agents coincide with his own, he must prevent the possibility of their infidelity, keep them liable to unexpected inspection, never confound the work of one with that of another that approbation may fall where it is due, and make it their interest mutually to be a check upon each other, without encouraging spies—a system which never fails to draw contempt on those who employ them." * * *

"Special knowledge need not prevent general

instruction besides. Whatever place we may fill in the vast structure of society, it is always desirable that our ideas should extend beyond it, in order to learn its relations with other parts of the edifice, and the nature of those by which it is more immediately affected. The other qualities favourable to the master of a factory are those moral attributes, useful not only in the operations of industry, but in every situation of life: such are the activity by which a man seems to multiply his existence, and which he communicates to everything around; perseverance to surmount the difficulties by which human life is overspread; self-command, through which he consults the interests of his enterprise, rather than his affections and resentments; which enables him to meet the perversity of others, rather with disdain than irritation, and to repel alike the counsels of fear and those of rashness.

"After having collected every possible information, and made all the calculations the nature of the business requires, if he then judge that the advantages of the undertaking surpass its risks, he must be able to brave that uncertainty which attends the result of everything human.

"I would not encourage rashness; it endangers the happiest conceptions. But I would inspire a judicious boldness that knows how to encounter risks, and an imperturbable coolness in seeking the means of escaping them. I wish to perceive a quality still more rare perhaps than courage, I mean that steadiness which does not forsake a work begun, either because another presents itself, or that success is

slow, or because of a thousand small crosses, to which too much attention should never be paid. It is only weak or slight characters that are deterred by such causes, from going on to their ends."

These are not the speculations of a mere theorist; for Say had been for some years a manufacturer himself. To his fine description should be added, (what indeed in a mind so trained and informed could scarcely be wanting,) a conscientious regard to the rights of human nature, and a wisely-directed benevolence consistently practised, unmoved by the misconceptions or ingratitude of their objects, or the calumnies of party and rivalry.

To the progress of such a spirit, we must look for the prosperity of the manufacturing classes, and for the mitigation of the evils which afflict the labouring people.

Section IX.

Of Domestic Servants.

The comparative corruption of servants in the present day, is a subject of frequent remark among persons, who can remember five-and-twenty or thirty years back. Some of their defects are evidently referable to luxury, or to some of its consequences; because indolent and prodigal habits in the upper classes, must inevitably produce many vices in their attendants. Domestic servants form a large body continually changing; and who therefore carry the contamination of their vices, and the taste for vanity and luxury, into other branches of the community.

In the service of persons of moderate fortunes, there is often much to improve the ideas of those who enter it; but experience has proved, that its influence is insufficient to counteract the more general corruption.

Every neighbourhood has its examples of great households where the servants are living like Comus's crew, and where there is a rapid succession of them. On these situations, the views of the young persons who are designed for service are fixed: they consider the households of small families, regulated with strict economy, as bad places, which they enter only as passports to the others; to these perhaps they may never attain, but their character is very much formed by what their wishes and hopes aspire to; and it is the dress, manner, and sentiments of the "high life below stairs" servants that they imitate. Servants too often suppose they have a direct interest in flattery and in peculation; and the minds of many of them are degraded, by the necessity of submitting to the bad passions of their superiors: persons taught for the sake of gain to endure injustice, violence, contempt, caprice, suspicion, lose self-respect, and soon deserve the contumely they dare not resist. The deportment which would be manly resolution, or generous indignation in a countryman, would be deemed insolence in a servant.

They have too many opportunities of observing tricks and meannesses connected with all that is distinguished by rank and worldly honour. On the vice and profligacy which they sometimes witness, it is needless to expatiate. The nature of their duties

tends to give exaggerated importance to the interests of pleasure and vanity, under every form; the scandal and personal malice which they hear poured out at dinner-tables, is very corrupting to them; and the tedious waiting and night-watches on our pleasures, in the very centre of temptation to all kinds of profligacy, almost force them into the paths of vice. The familiar gossip, which women sometimes indulge in with their waiting-maids, and still more, the indiscreet confidence they sometimes repose in them, are injurious to both parties, for they initiate the inferior into the knowledge of follies and vanities which are very misleading to their minds; the indiscretions that have been communicated, though not very blameable, have sometimes to be concealed; and this leads to a traffic of the most degrading nature, in which the artifice and secresy of an inferior are purchased by the superior, with never-ending concessions to the growing insolence and rapacity of a low mind.

Even in the service of the sober-minded, servants see an importance attached to dress, equipage, and cookery, which leads them to suppose that the most respectable part of mankind place their chief happiness in those enjoyments, no less than the worldly; they cannot become acquainted with the contempt and weariness their superiors often feel for the vanities to which they are sometimes obliged to conform. Servants can never be admitted to the counsels, that reveal the real tastes of their masters upon such subjects, or the reasons which justify a certain degree of splendour in persons of fortune. If they do dis-

cover that their master cares very little for the luxuries that surround him, the only inference they can draw from the attention he bestows on them, is that he acts upon principle; and the further inference is naturally drawn by them, that those things are really of great consequence. These notions, transferred to their own sphere, lead first to vanity, and last to penury: withdrawn from companionship with the working classes, they have no corrective, in their humbler example, to the perverted ideas respecting dress, diet, and labour, which they derive from the customs of their superiors; and they learn to despise many of the most profitable and prudent employments of domestic economy. Their condition, except as to eating and drinking, is but uncomfortable; they are occupied, but they can scarcely be said to have any pursuit; whether they do well or ill, their salary is the same, therefore they are tempted to think, that the less they do for their money the better for them; the consequence of this is, that, taking no interest in their duties, the performance of them becomes the more wearisome, and the sense of restraint the more irksome. Very often their business is far from being laborious, but it is harassing, because it has no respite; the well-earned evening liberty, the welcome holiday, come not to them; they are also very much cut off from the best social affections, those of a family, and can hardly cultivate a friendship.

A set of persons, total strangers, and probably with discordant tempers and interests, are thrown together in one household, to work continually in company, at separate, sometimes at clashing busi-

ness, consisting mostly of petty details, that possess in themselves no interest, except that they are duties. Servants have no command of leisure in which to create a pursuit of their own, were they capable of any. In other conditions, what a man sells to his employer is his labour; it is something specific; the performance requires a definite portion of time, known before hiring; the rest is their own, and except as to the terms of their engagement, they are perfectly free; but what a domestic servant sells, is his time itself; the whole of it belongs to his master, and should he find that his servant had a few hours of leisure, he would have a right to set him to any other work that he pleased. It is true there is between them a tacit understanding, that he shall not be set to any employment quite opposed to the nature of the duties he engaged for; but this point is regulated more by custom or fancy than the reason of the case, and is a frequent source of dispute.

The condition of domestic servants is unavoidably such as described. The principal reason we hire servants at all, is that we may have attendants always at command. The greater sacrifice of personal rights which their engagement requires, is not mentioned as a hardship inflicted on them by their masters, (who often give their attendants too little to do,) but as a circumstance not very favourable either to virtue or happiness. There can be little doubt that the natural emotions, men in that condition are obliged to smother when addressed with terms and tones of insult which would not be used towards a mechanic, settle occasionally into sullen villany, or

selfish servility. In families of moderate income and regular habits, we find the best servants: they are individually better known to their masters, and their good feelings are oftener called forth. The praiseworthy struggles made by their master to educate and provide for his children, to maintain his station, and yet to extend charity to the distressed, often come too plainly before their eyes, not to excite their respect and their sympathy; good feelings are thus called forth and exercised; their consciences are wakened to the injury they are doing to him by waste and pilfering; and whatever good principles they may have had on the subject, gather strength. But if the family make the pursuit of pleasure their chief business, all such ideas are confounded; for it is nearly impossible that the ignorant should feel much compunction at wasting, or even grasping at a share of that wealth, which they see lavished on mere display and amusement: such conduct can scarcely appear to them in the colours of guilt, till the magnitude of their frauds has become very great; but in the mean time the steps of their criminality have been so progressive, that their hearts have become hardened to it. So corrupted are their habits of thinking on the subjects of integrity and frugality, that, in general, they rather admire the man who spends everything on display, and pity him when he is ruined and defrauds his creditors.

In a family where pleasure and prodigality are the rule of life, what can a really upright servant do? is he to live in the household, the object of general fear, malignity, and insult? If in an inferior ca-

pacity, is he to become a martyr by exposing the dishonesty he witnesses—and that for a stranger, of whose justice and gratitude he by no means feels sure? how shall he prove he is not actuated by malice, or the desire to raise himself on the ruin of others? will his integrity save him from dismissal for some unskilfulness, which cannot be tolerated where show is the business of life, and then from being kept out of service, by the vengeful calumnies of those whom his honesty had exposed? If he remain a passive spectator of the wild career, a mute auditor of the falsehoods he could detect, how is it possible to avoid becoming as corrupt as the rest? is it not in itself corruption, to witness the unsuspecting betrayed, the ignorant misled, the decorous discredited by the licentiousness of his inmates, and to live in consenting amity with the spoilers?

In an upper station, a servant who attempts to restrain abuses finds himself detested, vilified, and so counteracted that all his measures are defeated: his prudent directions are executed, purposely, so as to ensure some awkward failure in style or attendance. If his master, during some fit of economy, should uphold this bold reformer, and part with the intriguing inferiors, he can replenish his household only from the debased market. It would be long indeed before a dozen of honest and virtuous men and women could be sifted out, all at the same time possessed of that practised ability and showy exterior required by the fastidious taste of the master. In the mean time uproar, confusion, and complaints vex the repose of the family, and the Joseph

Hume of the household is dismissed by acclamation; with the character of a well-meaning fellow in his way, but so headstrong and quarrelsome, nobody can live in the house with him, and who leaves you no peace from his details about cheese-parings. Even when some lucky coincidence enables an upright and diligent steward, to regulate the household and retain his situation, the reckless spirit of a spendthrift master renders all his economy unavailing; his savings are not noticed, his principles are not appreciated: as the frauds of a bad servant pass undetected, so the economy of a good one remains without honour; and he is left to the solitary consciousness of his own rectitude for his reward. That cold indifference to vice or virtue so characteristic of the great world, under the garb of good nature screens the guilty, while it neglects the deserving. To benefit a good man requires some exertion, though it be slight; the very term reward implies some effort, some sacrifice of time or money, at least of thought or attention; but a dishonest man finds sufficient advantages in that sleepy neglect, which enables him to pilfer at his ease.

Thus it is that the households of many persons, who are themselves untainted by any direct criminality, and who have even some very good qualities, become nests of corruption to their servants. Surely, when we review the temptations we throw in their way, and the total indifference to their interests so commonly displayed towards them, it is a matter of surprise, not that their good feelings are so often stifled, but that we still find among them so many

excellent characters. Families, where it is the habit to show an interest in their happiness, are seldom without a few servants who attend on them with devoted attachment. The attention we receive from them in sickness or calamity is often such as no money could purchase, and few but our dearest connexions ever bestow. It is painful to a generous mind, to see the insulting and preposterous exclusion of livery servants from public places, open to all other classes, while at the same time we admit them to our own drawing-rooms. If we return home after an absence, or visit a friend's house, it excites an emotion almost of shame, to see that servants, who have known us perhaps for years, dare not approach us with an expression of welcome, so little are they permitted to put themselves on the footing of a fellow-creature. How is it possible to expect any real attachment to spring up between masters and servants, in families where there is neither an order and discipline that commands their respect, nor personal kindliness to waken their affections?

Section X.

Of Waste and Prodigality.

It would be hard to choose any subject, upon which false notions are more inveterate, than they are upon that of waste and prodigality, and on which people continue to injure society with so little consciousness of doing wrong. "Everybody," it is said, "may do what he will with his own;" "If he prefer spending to saving, that is nobody's business

but his;" "If he do not beggar his family, or leave his debts unpaid, his profusion can injure no one but himself;" "All that he spends others gain;" "If the rich did not buy the poor could not sell, therefore the more the former waste the better for trade;" "The man who spends too little is a miser, a wretch, useless to society and universally hated." These notions, depending (as will be shown) on fallacious assumptions or inaccurate ideas, uphold a system extensively mischievous. The effects of it are concealed from observation by the great numbers who are forced, by their circumstances, to act generally on a principle directly opposite. If the prodigals waste or consume much more than they produce, the agricultural and mercantile bodies produce much more than they consume, and thereby maintain society, notwithstanding the destructive influence of the wasteful. But this influence is not the less real because the separate damage of each individual cannot be traced; it would be hard to assign to each locust in a swarm its share of the general devastation, yet there is no doubt that the total mischief is in exact proportion to the number and voracity of the destroyers.

The consequences of waste may be made more evident by considering the manner in which society is supported. "A small body of adventurers, landing on the extensive and fertile coasts of North America, were all near perishing from want, in those districts where now above thirteen millions are living in abundance." When the hardships of the first settlement were conquered, and those pilgrims

and wanderers had begun to gather the first crops they could rescue from the casualties of their new-found region, if they had continued to consume within each year what each year produced, they must have remained, like the scanty and wide-scattered Indian tribes, transmitting hereditary want and danger, from generation to generation. But as they consumed less than they produced, their increasing numbers were sustained; and food being secured, they were enabled to turn their industry to the production of things that last and survive their producers,—houses, furniture, implements of every description, roads, bridges, enclosures, and to draining, clearing the ground, and other improvements of a durable nature, or that tended to increase the productive services of their implements, their labour, and their land. All these formed successive stores of increasing wealth for their descendants, being all more or less durable and valuable. In this early stage of society, the mischief of waste is self-evident. It was not solely by drawing fresh creations out of the earth, but by saving them when produced, that increasing numbers could be provided for. Had each generation consumed all it produced, the succeeding one would still have been, like the first, entirely dependent on the scanty supply their own unassisted exertions could extract, from the successive portions of new soil over which they might wander; they would still have been liable to the same privations and hardships as the first settlers, and equally endangered by every casualty of the seasons; their numbers would have increased very

slowly; and their utmost exertions being required to produce the first necessaries of life, there would have been very little civilization. In these circumstances therefore the mischief of waste is apparent; it was they who were saving, as well as producing, who were best serving society. Those who consumed all they produced, may have assisted indeed to keep up the existing numbers and strength of the little community, but were not providing for increased population, nor promoting the advancement of wealth and civilization. If to this disadvantage many of them had added the wasteful consumption of spendthrifts, the progress of society would have been greatly retarded, or wholly impeded. The frugality of those who preserved part of what they produced, furnished direct means of subsistence for new numbers, whose industry might thereby be turned to other productions; and population, comfort, and civilization could advance.

Now it is only necessary to attend to the foregoing statements, to perceive, that though, in a wealthy and populous country, waste and prodigality cannot lead to such immediate and great injury as among new settlers, yet the *tendency* of those vices is exactly the same; they are checking prosperity, or producing want, proportioned in some degree to their prevalence. The mischief is concealed from common observation by errors as to the function of money, and by the vague notions entertained by many persons of the powers of production, which being *indefinite*, they regard as *unlimited;* but the difference is very great and very important.

This last error shall be first considered. Everything requisite for life, as food, lodging, raiment &c., must be prepared by human labour and cost, before it is fitted for use; if no use is drawn out of it when made, the labour and cost have been given for nothing. Producing commodities is not like drawing water from a river; there is a limit, not only to what labour can do, but to what men can procure of the natural materials they employ, for nature gives us few things inexhaustibly, like air: some become locally scarce, others though abundant, are not accessible—some seem to be even wholly consumed—the ancients had some marbles which now cannot be found. Labour and materials are expended for the sustenance of human life, and the supply of enjoyments; their proper end and use is to get from them all the support and enjoyment possible; and this is the aim of frugality, just as much as of consumption, because, by sparing the fruits of labour, the means of greater reproduction are secured; it saves part of the crop for seed; this is to use them beneficially. But if when produced, the commodities are wasted, the labour and cost of materials are incurred, and the use not obtained. Man will not live by the sweat of his brow, if the fruits of it are destroyed, without yielding him their portion of benefit; it is that circumstance which distinguishes waste from beneficial consumption. In both cases, a commodity is consumed, but in the one case it deposits its portion of life, raiment, or some other enjoyment with man; in the other, it vanishes, leaving him his labour for his pains. The person who

wastes a commodity and the person who has made it are not always those who suffer from the want of it; but when there is not abundance for every one, *somebody* will want.

This leads to the error about the function of money. The reason the prodigal does not suffer the want of the commodity he has wasted is, because he may possibly have a great deal of money, to purchase as much more of whatever he desires as will last through his life. The maker of the commodity does not suffer, because having been paid for it, he can buy (with the money) the products of the industry of some other person. But money does not make anything, to supply the place of the wasted commodity; its office is only to distribute what is already existing. It may be considered as counters, denoting how much of the general stock in society, each man has a right to; whoever holds them, may draw so much value from society, but does not, by giving his money in exchange, *supply* consumable things. We may suppose an industrious man to have made a hundred pounds' worth of some commodity: he has a right to the same value of any other commodity he can get in exchange for it; the hundred sovereigns he receives for it denote the value he has poured into society in the form of commodities, and this value he has a right to draw from it again; if we suppose him to give his sovereigns to another person, that other gets a right to draw the commodities instead of him, but no more things are created by this transfer of money. Let us suppose that the latter person spends the money wastefully;

for instance, that he gives a masquerade, in which stuffs are cut up into fanciful dresses, good for nothing after the moment; or that he consumes twice the quantity of wine and provisions required for health and enjoyment, the money those things cost is gone to the mercer and wine-merchant, in whose hands it denotes *their* right to its value in commodities from society, because they gave so much into society. The money has fulfilled its function; but the goods that the mercer and wine-merchant gave for it, have (by the supposition) been destroyed without due *use;* they are the things *wasted;* and the sufferers are those who are compelled to forego the use of some commodity which is scanty, through the waste of others. If the goods thus wasted are objects of general utility in themselves, it is plain society has needlessly lost all the services those goods could yield to it, as well as the service of the original labour and cost spent in creating them. Nor is the injury less real by supposing the goods wasted to be some trivial production, of no *real use* to any one; for in this case, the waste may still be referred back to the first production of so useless a thing. Time, labour, and materials spent on a production which is of no value in itself, or which has done no good to any one, are really wasted; all that cost should have produced something for the benefit of society: it has produced nothing.

What can it signify (says the apologist of extravagance) when I buy a coat, whether I wear it, or destroy it? Has not the tailor been paid for it; and who but myself need care, whether I have a coat

more or less, or any coat at all? This is, I think, a fair expression of the error entertained on the subject by many people, and which it is hoped the preceding explanation will remove; but to give it more clearness and hold over the mind, the argument may be repeated and applied to the example of the coat. It may be observed, that it contains an admission of loss somewhere, since the apologist assumes that he takes it on himself. If this were so always, or could be so generally, the evil would be less than throwing the loss upon involuntary victims; but this is seldom the case, except with the poor. The wealthier classes deny themselves nothing because they have already consumed too much; but by means of money and credit they shift a great part of their own privations upon others; for they who purchase large quantities of commodities, and waste them, cause proportionate scarcity and dearness to the rest of society; the scarcity is shown by the increased price; the working man, with the same nominal wages as before, gets less for his money; and this is one of the ways, (but not the only one,) in which prodigals throw the consequences of their misconduct on others. The reader must also recollect that, in the example which was chosen to illustrate the argument of the spendthrift, the wasteful consumption of the coat is intended to represent wasteful consumption of all kinds. If it were really only one sort of commodity that was wasted, and thereby called for in needless profusion, it is conceivable that it might be supplied without raising the price; for capital and industry would be

withdrawn from the production of something else, to increase the quantity of the commodity demanded, which would be supplied so plentifully as to make it cheap; but in this case, the other things from which capital and industry had been withdrawn would be less plentifully produced; so that nothing can get rid of the argument, that part of the produce of capital and industry, instead of assisting to support society, has been thrown away. If the wasteful humour spread widely, if a large portion of society consume much more than their rational enjoyment requires, it is the same thing as if the nation possessed the means of maintaining a much smaller number of persons. If double the quantity of food, fuel, and clothing, now requisite for health and enjoyment, were required, (man's strength, and abilities, and the fertility of the soil remaining the same,) the penury already existing would also be doubled; the effect of waste is exactly the same, except as to degree.

In a country like England which is fully peopled, waste in food is the most pernicious of all forms of waste, because we come sooner to the limits of the food which can be supplied, than of the manufactures. In this respect, all classes are reprehensible; whether we regard the excess of the lower order in drinking, or that of the middle and upper classes in the luxury of their tables, the waste is very pernicious. If the consequences are injurious, merely when the results of labour and capital are destroyed without giving their true uses to any one, how much worse is it when they are spent in the produc-

tion of disease and depravity? The waste of a great man's kitchen is excessive; the daily allowance of meat for a soldier is said to be three-quarters of a pound; the consumption in a great establishment averages in general near two pounds per head, independent of fish, poultry, and every other animal substance, such as eggs, and dairy produce. A dinner of the best things in season at each time of the year, including wine, fruits, and ices, supposed for twelve persons, may be provided for six or seven pounds; the cost of preparing such a dinner in the great world, or for professed epicures in any class, is from thirty to forty pounds. Can anything justify the *frequency* of such wasteful prodigality?

Let any one form his own estimate of the number of persons who consume at least a half more than is healthful, of how many exceed even that quantity, of the enormous waste in refined cookery, and the still greater waste of labour and capital in producing things out of season; whatever the amount he arrives at, it will surely startle him to reflect on the numbers of those who might be fed, were it saved.

Let it not be imagined that withdrawing these demands of waste and excess, would merely cause less to be produced, and throw cooks, gardeners, and market-men out of employment. The money saved from excess would be laid out in other purchases, and direct industry to better objects; by restraining the fanciful desire for mere show and expense, the appetite may be indulged in any degree consistent with reason and health, without criminal waste.

The notion that a man employs more industry by

buying what he does not want, and wasting it, is a great error. Extravagance does not increase his own funds or income, therefore if he spend twice as much as he need on dress, he spends just so much less on other things: what one set of tradesmen obtain, another who might have been employed, lose: and the fact still remains unshaken, that some of the products of their industry were rendered useless. The workmen, it is true, were maintained; *they* got money which commanded the labour of other men, but the fruits of their own labour have vanished; it would have been better that their labour should have been spared for those who would have derived benefit from its results.

When the custom or demand that tradesmen have to provide for, depends on judicious consumption*, they can apportion their supplies to the probable demands with tolerable precision; whereas the demand of prodigals is capricious and irregular. To-day they spend largely and order much upon credit, to-morrow they are ruined, stop their demand altogether, and cannot pay even for what they had ordered; some things remain unsaleable on the tradesmen's hands, others are sold under their

* By "judicious consumption" is meant that which is founded on the demands of nature, reason, and good morals; such demands will never fail, or be subject to violent disturbance, for all men must make them in some degree. Hence becomes apparent the close connexion of good moral feelings and tastes with temporal prosperity, the consumers, by their constant indulgence of rational desires, affording a steady and regular market for the industry of the producers: whereas, the demands of passion and caprice can afford only a market that must fluctuate with the irregularity of those impulses.

value. Sales of this description may scatter some temporary convenience among those who are within reach of purchase; but the benefit, even to them, is somewhat counteracted by the temptation to purchase things that are of no great use, and that lead to a taste for expenses above the condition of the buyers. The indulgence in these is often continued, to the detriment both of their circumstances and character; the pleasure of an unexpected gain also rarely equals the pain of a loss incurred, for the gain is so diffused among many, as to be little more than a temporary enjoyment; but the loss falls on a small number of persons, drives them from their station, involves them in difficulties attended by the keenest distress, and occasions the discharge of their servants and workmen. The sudden stoppage of customary sources of employment produced by the ruin of the employers, is a never-failing cause of present calamity to the workmen; and even though the means of subsistence should ultimately be found elsewhere, it is after an interval of distress, during which the poorer class of workmen are forced to consume the savings they had previously made; the suffering is immediate, the remedy distant and uncertain. Thus, the prodigal cannot fall without involving others; and the only reason he is sometimes said to be nobody's enemy but his own is, that in the complicated relations of society, we cannot always see on whom the consequences of his folly fall heaviest.

Next to mere waste, is the mischief of great expenditure on things of a trifling or transitory nature. People are apt to imagine, that it does not much

signify what form of industry they encourage, provided the workman can live by it; but in things that are consumed very rapidly, the service they render is usually slight in proportion to their cost; therefore, when they are not things of necessity, spending much on them leads to poverty. Such productions are frequently a waste of labour; food, though it is rapidly consumed, has its value immediately replaced to us in the maintenance of life, health, and strength; but no similar benefit results from the transitory enjoyment of shows and entertainments; of services that give us only the indulgence of indolence, or the gratification of display; of flimsy decorations and toys that turn to no use, when the caprice that gave them fashion has changed. Enjoyments of this nature are not to be censured altogether: the pleasure derived from them, is sometimes very great, and, in moderation, always allowable in those who can afford them; but it should not be forgotten, that in many of them, when the momentary pleasure is over, nothing remains but a vague recollection, and that the tendency of the indulgence is towards poverty. Productions of a durable nature, on the contrary, such as buildings, libraries, or furniture, are sources of permanent utility and enjoyment, both for ourselves and posterity.

"The objects of all human labour and production are utility and enjoyment; it is clear, that when these qualities belong equally to any two productions of labour, the more durable is to be preferred to the more transient. Those forms of enjoyment which pass away rapidly, if they are costly can never be

extensively possessed by the body of mankind; if they are individually cheap, they require constant renewal from the necessity for pleasure they create, and thus they become costly by their frequency. In neither case is the love of such sensual and fleeting enjoyments, the character of highly moral and rational beings; it is to be seen in children, in savages, and barbaric nations; and in all those, the reason is neither fully disclosed nor cultivated. They who in civilized life are devoted to such pleasures, whatever they may think of themselves in point of refinement, are less removed from the condition of children and uncivilized beings than they suppose, and are less happy than they might be. They have only tried one path, while the really cultivated have compared both, and chosen the rational instead of the sensual; their judgment is the sounder, because of the comparison which they have had the opportunity of making; for mere animal and sensual pleasures are accessible to all, at some time or other of life. If then the whole people require such transitory pleasures, (and transitory, all sensual pleasures must be, for the perceptions of sense which cause them are incapable of great duration,) great cost must be incurred to maintain them; the pleasures of the rich being costly from their character and quality, those of the other classes from their frequency; the effect will be a rapid waste of the productive funds of a nation, leaving it poor, feeble, ignorant, and indolent. If these pleasures are confined to the higher and wealthier classes from their costliness,

then it is plain that a great deal of the labour and funds of society have been spent for the short-lived and generally corrupting pleasures of a small section; the rest, by the very supposition, are without them, and must also possess less of the necessaries and comforts of life, which will fail to be produced by the abstraction of so much of their labour, funds, and skill for the production of these needless indulgences. Cultivated moral minds are always frugal in such pleasures, and they leave, therefore, a greater share of human resources for the service of others; here again may be seen the intimate relation between reason, morals, and worldly prosperity."

The mere uncertainty of fashion and fancy, exposes the makers of trifles to more frequent reverses than the producers of things that are more essential. It is therefore injudicious to stimulate productions of this nature; it is always better to have too few, than too many; both on account of the perishable nature of the wealth they create, and the condition of the producers themselves. But no general argument could ever be expected to discourage productions and arts, that are desired by one part of society, merely because another might think them superfluous; it would also require more acquaintance with subjects of this nature, than private persons can possess, to be very confident what productions ought to be repressed, and what encouraged. Nothing, therefore, can be a substitute for that rational turn in the public mind, which, without any effort, prevents too many people from being attracted to frivolous

arts for their bread; this would be one effect of education, especially in the female sex.

To many persons it will appear paradoxical, to find it maintained that a miser is more useful to society than a prodigal*.

We are not now to consider the moral influence of that unamiable character, nor is it intended to undervalue its consequences. Contempt deservedly attends him whose frugality is regulated by mere selfishness, and whose mind is so contracted as to sacrifice the noblest ends of existence, to the purpose of increasing his wealth; but in comparing the effects of the two characters on the temporal prosperity of the people, we are obliged to confess, that the vice of the prodigal destroys the means of subsistence, and that the vice of the miser increases them; for money saved and lent, is thereby turned to capital, by which is meant, those commodities or productions of every kind, which are intended to be used in *further* production; and every time they are spent, their value is replaced by new productions†. Capital thus used is therefore never destroyed; every time it is consumed, it revives in a new form, and consti-

* See Note N. at the end of the volume.

† Capital is spent partly in the purchase of materials which are consumed in their actual form, and replaced in a new one. Suppose cotton and dye-stuffs, converted into chintz; the rest is spent in wages to spinners, weavers, dyers, and other workmen. These consume their wages in the form of food, raiment, fuel, &c., but the value of all is reproduced and increased in the chintz. It must be increased, because, if the chintz was not worth more than the cost of the material, and the labour of the men, it would not be made; the capitalist must get his support, too, out of the value of the final product.

tutes a permanent fund for the employment and support of the working classes; as well as for the capitalist. Capital is spent, as well as income; but what is spent as income is *totally* consumed, and never revives in another form; it supplies us with life and enjoyment, (the end and purpose of all production,) but it does not provide for the future. When income is saved, it is lent and turned to capital, and in that way the wealth of the community increases. When capital is spent as income, it is finally consumed, and that tends to national poverty.

Thus it may be seen how the selfishness of the miser is less injurious to society than the lavish expenditure of a spendthrift. The money he lays up is all spent, just as much as that of the prodigal, only by other hands, and for other purposes. With a part of his income he purchases from the general stock a few commodities for his own consumption; the rest of his income which he saves and lends, is paid away by the borrower to labourers, who produce a great deal more than its value*. The income of the prodigal is mostly expended for what he consumes himself, or for services that end with the moment.

The moral evil of a penurious disposition is assuredly great; it chills the affections, which it is the great duty of parents and masters to cultivate; often it blights the prospects of the young and dependent. It is akin to injustice and cruelty; it closes the heart against the emotions that most

* See note O. at the end of the volume.

ennoble our nature. A miser cannot be loved; who would choose such a man for his friend?

The prodigal, on the contrary, may have many engaging amiable qualities; but alas! for the miseries, which tenderly-excited affections add to the depression and difficulties of a decaying family.

Even though some families may be rising on one side, while others are sinking to ruin, the compensation is not equal in point of happiness, whatever it may be as to wealth. A person born to competence has tastes, feelings, and habits formed by his circumstances, and which are sources of the severest suffering, when he is forced to forego them: "to us descent is adverse." The want of them to those who never had formed the habits, is no diminution of enjoyment at all.

It has been remarked that two men, one beginning with a thousand a year, and ending with a hundred; the other beginning with a hundred, and ending with a thousand—will both have possessed precisely the same means of enjoyment, but the effect on the happiness of each will have been very different. The suffering of the one at the last, will be much worse than that of the other at first. Through his whole career, he is attended by the depressing sense of progressive ruin; every other source of happiness is overcast by the gloom of his circumstances; the blessings of children, wife, friends, adorned and endeared by their virtues and talents, become objects of additional anguish as he beholds them enduring privations, and mortifications for which their habits had unfitted them. But great as

is the contrast of feeling in a course of fortune continually rising, and admitting it to be one of the happiest conditions of life, yet in spite of it all, a man so circumstanced, may be very unhappy; progressive gain will not exclude other sorrows, though progressive ruin may sadden other joys; and therefore under every aspect, the vice that destroys existing prosperity, is more certainly productive of misery, than worldly prudence is of happiness.

Among the evils of a prodigal spirit, its effect in corrupting the integrity of others must not be forgotten. As soon as it is seen that a man does not care how he squanders his money, he becomes the prey of sharpers, sycophants, and pilferers. Every shop he enters has a particular price for him, and for such as he; high-born friends, with empty purses, come to his house to ride his horses, drink his wine, draw him into much more expense than he intended, and keep up their consequence with the rest of society by affecting to sneer at his entertainments.

There is no necessary connexion between frugality and avarice, though they are sometimes united. When a spirit of frugality has not been practised upon reflection and principle, but solely from unreasoning habit, it may be found accompanied by contracted feelings. In a person removed from a confined to a great sphere of action, the frugality of an ill-regulated mind might exhibit itself in mean and unbecoming penuriousness, sacrificing great and useful purposes to small savings; but the frugality now advocated would hesitate less at expending a

thousand pounds for an adequate end, than ten shillings for a bauble; it implies the capacity of making the due comparison between a moral benefit and a pecuniary sacrifice, and is as capable of munificence as of saving. The combination of mental habits which it requires is uncommon only, because the judgment in youth is seldom well-directed; for it does not depend on uncommon abilities or extraordinary generosity of feeling. A cultivated judgment, accustomed to considering the relative importance of different things, will make the lesser consideration give way to the greater, as a matter of course; this constitutes a habit of self-control, which, being daily exercised on small matters, is a good preparation for acting with dignity in great ones; and the pettiness, so often contracted in the management of minute details, is prevented by the dignity and importance of that end which is the real motive of action. I cannot conclude the discussion of prodigality without some observations, not directly belonging to that subject, but more naturally connected with the consideration of wasteful and injudicious productions, than with any other matter, on which the attention of the reader is yet to be detained.

The wasteful nature of frivolous and transitory productions, and the precarious employment afforded by things depending very much on fancy, have already been suggested. Next to the frivolity that first creates a vehement demand for some trifle, and then consigns it to utter disgrace, is the mischief of busy benevolent ignorance, which, from mistaken charity, supports impostors and idlers, or draws poor persons

into misfortune by giving artificial support to employments that in themselves have no principle of stability.

The real support of industry is the demand that arises from natural and rational wants, for such only can be permanent. They who cannot sell their productions, except to those who buy them solely from charity, are making what is useless: they are, in fact, living as much at the expense of society as if they were beggars. It is true that they may be more deserving persons; for it may be by no fault of theirs that they have been led to waste their industry on useless things. It may therefore be very right to purchase the fruits of their industry, for the same reason that it might be right in some cases to maintain them in idleness, namely, their distress and their worthiness; but the practice censured is that of *directing* industry to productions, which can be disposed of only by forced sales and artificial protection. It is by no means easy to know in all cases whether a new branch of industry will succeed, or whether one, already failing, should be supported through its weakness or abandoned as hopeless; there are few matters upon which even governments have made more mistakes. One great use of general instruction is, not to make everybody a judge of everything but, to inspire caution. An acquaintance with general principles does not ensure our always knowing what is, or will be in particular cases, but it gives considerable security that we shall apprehend what *may* be, and thereby we learn to inquire before we act. When a man has read and learned enough to feel

practically how many more circumstances attend every subject, than he can know of, he has then taken that first great step by which knowledge becomes wisdom. There is an ignorance that does not even know there is anything to be known, beyond what its short sight can discern at the first glance.

These inquiries into the subject of luxury have extended to a great length, in the persuasion that a view of the subject, more practical than usual, might be given. It was too closely connected with the influence of women on manners to leave it imperfect.

That luxury is attended with evils of a very serious description is little more than a truism; but there is a great difference in the effect upon our mind, between merely assenting to a general proposition, and following its consequences in detail, till we see all its bearings. This has been attempted in the preceding Sections and the Notes, by tracing the connexion between certain existing states of society, and some of the admitted general principles of social economy. Persons, little accustomed to the consideration of these subjects, might perhaps question the truth of principles in the abstract, which they would at once admit when exemplified in practice: or if they admitted their truth generally, would feel and notice it too vaguely to enable them afterwards to apply the principles to practical cases when they arose, or even to discern, by their own efforts, the connexion between the theory they had learned and the practice they beheld. The want of this mental exercise is one reason why maxims and precepts have so little influence over conduct, though in theory they are always assented to.

It will scarcely be assumed that all improvement is impossible,—that we are just now at that point of moral and social perfection, beyond which human society cannot advance a step; but in truth, our progress will be slow and uncertain unless the education and the condition of women be improved, for it is time that these should be regulated by justice and by the true interests of society, and not left to accidental influences. If it has been shown, that their want of an education sufficiently liberal retards moral and social progress, let that education be better directed,—let their rights correspond with their mental elevation, and be such as to give free play and influence to their virtues. Their condition is, ever was, and ever ought to be, subordinate; let their subordination be regulated by the clear and intelligible principles of reason, and it will produce what subordination always ought to produce, an order in the parts that promotes power and harmony in the whole of society.

Far the greater part of the moral and prudential subjects, which have been treated of under the head of luxury, come as much, if not more, within the control of women than within that of men; and over the rest, their influence, though indirect, is powerful. In every class of society the details of domestic life must, and ought to be, in their hands; and no spirit of frugality on the part of the other sex can ever take much effect, unless women are willing and judicious assistants; for authority (were it even greater than it is) orders, rules, or limitations from one party, can never supply the place of a con-

vinced and cultivated judgment in the other; it would be in vain to expect that docile fools (if there be such a species) should supply the place of intelligent and informed partners.

One of the chief endeavours, throughout thi work, has been to exhibit in several relations of life the importance of solid instruction. To be aware of its value, and, under the misfortune of slender acquirements, to avoid the presumption and rashness of ignorance, is the advantage we gain from the first steps in well-chosen knowledge. To have passed this threshold is the only pretension of the present writer: and to lead others of her own sex with her, whose advances will leave her remote in the distance, is her earnest desire.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON FRIVOLITY AND IGNORANCE.

SECTION I.

Influence of Frivolity on Education.

A SEPARATE chapter on the present heads, may seem to threaten the reader with a great deal of repetition; the consideration of them was nearly inseparable from that of luxury, and reflections on their consequences to society, are necessarily interwoven with many other parts of this work. There are, however, two or three subjects over which the influence of frivolity and ignorance is so dangerous, that it requires fuller development than could have been given to it in connexion with other matters: these are education, politics, and religion. In nothing else can the frivolity with which women are reproached be equally hurtful, because it is here that their influence over the other sex can instil prejudices during youth, that in after life react banefully on society.

In public life, the great sources of delinquency are, no doubt, selfish passions and want of integrity; yet much of the wrong daily done, proceeds more from the combined effects of frivolity and ignorance, than deliberate guilt; for if, on the one side, few people are capable of a generous sacrifice to the good

of their country; on the other, there are assuredly many, who would not, as Lord Bacon says, "set their neighbour's house on fire, to roast their own eggs." But they do not perceive that the personal interest they are pursuing, is as an egg to a house. They cannot estimate the importance of the public interest they are violating. If they were instructed, and thinking enough, to understand all its consequences, they would not sacrifice it to what, even to themselves, is, or ought to be a trifle; but they have been trained up in systematic attention to frivolous concerns, and into these they can enter, with the keenness both of habit and taste. It is therefore impossible they should weigh the value of what they do feel against what they do not. It is easy to recall instances in which trivial considerations of show, decoration, or etiquette, have been put forward in heroics, against the gravest interests of life.

In the middle classes, exclusive attention to the details of a confined business, uncorrected by liberal studies, produces similar pettiness, though displayed upon different objects; hence the feelings become contracted. In neither case is there any corrective more effectual than well-chosen books. Life must often consist of acts or concerns which taken individually are trivial; but the speculations of great minds relate to important objects. By their eloquence, they draw forth the best emotions of which we are capable; they fill our minds with the knowledge of great and general truths; which, if they relate to the works of creation, exalt our nature and almost give us a new existence, or if they unfold the condi-

tions and duties of human life, they kindle our desire for worthy ends, and teach us how to promote them. We learn to consider ourselves, not as single and detached beings with separate interests from others, but as parts of that great class who are the support of society; that is, the upright, the intelligent, and the industrious. Hence we cease to be absorbed by one set of narrow ideas; and the least duties are dignified, by being viewed as parts of a general system. The bulk of mankind must and ought to confine their attention principally to their own immediate business. But if they who belong to the higher orders, do not avail themselves of their command of time, to enlarge their minds and acquire knowledge, one of the great uses of an upper class will be lost.

School and college education are not alone sufficient to form the character, or to enable the young to derive from books all the instruction they afford; and it must not be overlooked, that narrow views imply false views; they imply that only one side of the subject has been discerned, and that the least important. In this respect, the moral part of our nature reacts upon the intellectual. The epithet narrow-minded expressly means the shallow or ungenerous views that men take of the interests of their fellow-creatures. Better moral cultivation would therefore give one person a great apparent superiority of understanding over another, who in abilities and knowledge might nevertheless be his equal. The method of giving it, is by rousing the sympathies of the young with the great and the use-

ful; but it can be done only by those who feel such affections themselves. At schools, the instruction is usually too elementary to create a taste for it. It is but the acquisition of an instrument, the uses of which the pupil cannot appreciate. At college, when the young men meet with a tutor, who has the art of exciting their minds, the benefit is strongly felt, and often acknowledged through life. It is by addressing our moral nature, that he affects the understanding. He renders the studies of the young both interesting and profitable, by wakening their sensibility to the utility and the grandeur of them; and these are moral sentiments. But such instructors are not frequently found: the number of young men is lamentably great, who, after an expensive education, come away without the least taste for all they have learned, and very imperfect ideas of its applications and utility; accordingly they make little use of it afterwards.

Learning has certainly a tendency in itself to awaken a taste for the elevated and the useful. But for one mind capable of imbibing a love for it, for its own sake, there are many who would catch it by sympathy from others. A great proportion of those who, unassisted, are not capable of discerning the value and beauty of science and literature, can yet feel them very strongly when pointed out, especially by a person they love and respect. There is therefore no substitute for a guiding mind; a mind to implant a sense of the value of the truths that are taught, and give the habit of reasoning justly upon facts.

Notwithstanding the defects of the present system of public education, it gives habits of mind that are an excellent foundation for the moral efforts of a judicious parent to work upon. The exact and rigid studies of the schools, the attention, accuracy, and close reasoning they require, are a good training for the mind, whatever the subjects to which it may be afterwards turned; but they are neither everything, nor a substitute for what they omit. They are neither so connected with subjects of life and conduct, as to lead the mind on to such considerations; nor do they give certain other habits that moral inquiries demand, such as observation on the course of events, or reflection on what is passing in our own minds; and they have little or no effect in exciting sympathy with others.

School and college studies impose a great check on the wandering of young imaginations. They concentrate the attention on what is before it, and teach the difference between a strict proof of truth, and a mere impression or prejudice. As mental training, this is all good, but it does not tend to give excursiveness to observation: knowledge, or opinions of a doubtful character, or at least which the pupil is permitted to think doubtful, are presented to him as little as possible: this is as it should be. A more valuable acquisition can scarcely be made by the young, than a body of solid, well-ascertained knowledge for a ground-work. But when the things taught are indisputable, either from their own nature or the authority upon which they rest, all that the learner has to do is to understand and remember;

but these do not necessarily give the disposition to observe new facts or to inquire about them; still less do they give the faculty of comparing a number of facts and arguments on different sides of a question, and forming an original judgment, independent alike of the sanction of authority or the satisfaction of demonstration; in a word, they do not tend much to improve the judgment as to the probable. Probability, however, not certainty, is the great rule of life; and he who is not practised in estimating it, may possibly make a tolerable proficiency in acquired knowledge, but he will never make a judicious man*. Parents who avail themselves of the holidays, (which amount to more than a quarter of the year,) to form the minds of their sons, by guiding their tastes and judgments, double the value of the education they pay for. But it is too often the case that little use is made by the parents of those intervals: they are satisfied with seeing that their boys do not wholly omit to prepare themselves for examination at school, in whatever had been given to them for study at home; and sometimes the example of idleness and pleasure they find there counteracts the best influence of their education. Much can be done towards creating useful and elevated tastes, and implanting right principles, by conversation. Though a father should have no leisure to give direct instruction, his authority will generally give efficacy to his opinions; but the mother is always at hand, and can have no business more important than to form the minds of her children. She can be more

* See Note P. at the end of the volume.

their companion, and it is greatly in her power to impress their young minds with veneration for the example and opinions of their father: if, unhappily, they be not such as to deserve it, she can counteract the effects of them. A man may be too indolent, or too fond of his pleasures to be himself a good guide for his children, and yet, if he have any affection or principle, he will not counteract what their mother instils, and what he knows to be right: on the contrary, he will probably use his authority to strengthen hers, and she can confirm her children's respect for him, by making her precepts appear to flow equally from him.

But a frivolous woman, without doing designedly wrong, brings up her children in an enfeebling atmosphere; she clothes frivolity with grace, and inspires a sympathetic interest in the trifles that are always her pursuit. She has no conception that idleness is objectionable, unless the lessons be neglected for it; and her only idea of bad reading is, such as inculcates deliberate vice; consequently, a torrent of feeble trash is always at hand to enervate the powers imperfectly matured by school exercises. If the father remonstrate, this may be restrained for awhile, but his principle is not understood; there is ever something at hand to plead for, as an exception to a rule that seems rigid: "This, I am sure, is quite innocent; I dare say your papa will let you read this." It is not easy to explain to a person whose mind is trifling, the consequences of the over-indulgence in passive impressions, produced by light reading, or to make them understand the different

effect produced by the highest order of works of imagination, and the trivial compositions which inundate the press, with no merit but some commonplace moral. Both are classed together as works of amusement; but the first enrich the mind with great and beautiful ideas, and provided they be not indulged in to an extravagant excess, refine the feelings to generosity and tenderness. They counteract the sordid, or the petty turn, which we are liable to contract from being wholly immersed in mere worldly business, or given up to the follies of the great world; in either case, confined too much to intercourse with barren hearts and narrow minds. It is of great use to the "dull, sullen prisoner in the body's cage" sometimes "to peep out," and be made to feel that it has aspirations for somewhat more excellent than it has ever known; and that its own ideas can stretch forth into a grandeur, beyond what this real existence provides for it. It is good for us to feel that the vices into which we are beguiled are hateful to our own minds in contemplation, and that it is our unconquerable nature to love and adore that virtue we do not, or cannot attain to. These are the effects of fine poetry and eloquence; but the greater number of common works of fiction, do nothing but deprave the taste and mislead the judgment: they leave no lasting traces of beauty or greatness in the mind: they are full of false sentiments, and create a vivid interest even about those follies which they affect to condemn: they are addressed to passions which it is dangerous to stimulate, and just enough resembling

reality to create false notions of human life, and misdirect our efforts. Trifling books of other descriptions are injurious, principally from their feebleness and bad taste, but they also abound with false opinions and crude judgments.

Even when the novels, tales, poems, albums, memoirs, and tours, are kept within moderate bounds by the authority of one parent, the spirit of them is kept alive in the conduct of life, by the frivolity of the other. It is not uncommon to find children very well managed in their early years, by women who have but little solidity of character in other respects: upon this subject they have an earnest desire to do right. They have perhaps read some works upon education, or at least some of the excellent children's books now published, and which convey a great deal of useful practical knowledge to the teachers. The defect of the parent, however, cannot exist without doing mischief; for unconsciously she imparts, or at least indulges, an unreasonable attachment to trifles, which causes a false estimate of the requisites for happiness or the maintenance of station, and a false judgment of right and wrong on many points of great moment, to which the imaginary importance of some frivolous concern prevents a proper regard being paid.

Nothing of all this is detected during childhood: an observer is delighted, and justly, with the order and cheerfulness which prevail in the nursery and school-room, with the progress the children make, almost without compulsion, in their lessons, and with the useful tastes given to them in the way

of amusement; but a woman, whose judgment is weak, and who is not capable of taking an enlarged view of the duties of life, can neither give strength and elevation to the principles of her children; nor, while they are obedient and tolerably well tempered, can she detect the germs of qualities, which break out afterwards into egregious defects. Selfishness, vanity, prejudice, and weakness form themselves into innumerable compounds, and at their entrance into life, the seemingly well-brought up children exhibit vices and follies, which we think the commonest care might have controlled.

Section II.

Influence of Frivolity on Public Life.

Between the frivolity of men and women there are these differences: the frivolity and ignorance of men individually often do mischief upon a large scale, as they spread their consequences over life, liberty, and property: those of women are individually more confined to a home circle; they act in detail. A few silly women, however high in station, might do no great harm, except in their own families. A few frivolous, ignorant men, in a certain station, might get into power and do more mischief in a year than many wise men could repair in twenty. The amusements of a man are more expensive and more akin to passions than those of women: he is more solemn about them. His field-sports, his races, his cards, his equipage are put on a level with

the most serious concerns of life. If treated of as what they are, luxuries or agreeable amusements, and therefore very good things while kept in their place, (which is one wholly subordinate to greater interests,) he draws up with an air of suppressed scorn for the person who can take so absurd a view. The history of the game-laws is a terrible proof of the excesses to which men will go in pursuit of their amusements. Women have not power enough to make their amusements matters of grave legislation, but they keep up that spirit of frivolity which in the other sex produces disastrous consequences.

There are few maxims that less bear examination, than that women should take no interest in politics. They are as amenable to the law as men; they are affected by taxes like them; the effects of misgovernment fall on them as on others, for they do not remain at ease and in affluence while the property of their husbands and fathers is invaded, their industry impeded, or life made insecure by injustice or impolicy. "It is very natural, if we are to lose our heads to ask why," replied Madame de Staël, when Napoleon addressed her abruptly, to say he "hated women who meddled in politics." So long as they are liable to lose either their heads or their property, by acts of the government, it is probable that, whether it be right or wrong, they will continue to take an interest in public measures. It is therefore desirable they should have sufficient instruction to do so with discretion.

There is an easy way of obtaining a foolish verdict: it is to introduce some epithet or phrase that

assumes the whole question—"A woman should not meddle in politics." This must be granted, for meddling always implies *undue* interference, and the most ignorant are ever the greatest meddlers. Meddling proceeds from conceit and ignorance,—qualities that make people troublesome and impertinent in every relation of life. There are some minds in whom conceit is so inherent, that it can be controlled neither by repeated mortifications, nor daily experience of their own incapacity. It seems constitutional, and is too tenacious to yield to instruction or rather the attempt at instruction, for a shallow bed rejects deep waters: nevertheless, the general rule is, that conceit and its attendant rashness are cured by knowledge. They who know enough to discern the extent and importance of political science, lose inclination to take up decisive opinions on disputable measures, or to press them upon others: they feel no temptation to step out of the line of their own direct duties, to take an active part in what may turn out erroneous or mischievous. But it must be as difficult for women as for men, not to catch the political passions which are blazing all round them, touching their personal interests, actuating their friends and relations, coming across them in general conversation, in private confidence, in daily newspapers, in novels, pamphlets, and even in sermons. The question is, shall they do so under the guidance of ignorance or instruction?

At present, nothing can exceed the frivolity of the reasons, which very frequently determine the

political opinions of women, except the virulence with which they are maintained, and the indiscretion with which they are acted on. They are determined by prejudices of the idlest character, by favouritism, by vanity, by timidity; and in consequence, they lead to fears, with their attendant enmities, where there is no real danger, and to headstrong pertinacity where there is everything to apprehend. Thus the bitterness and impolicy of party spirit is fostered and spread, and we find women, from pure ignorance, advocating the most oppressive measures, and defending the most dishonest jobbing. Sometimes political practices which men, more cautious, disguise or disavow till they know their company, women betray openly, quite unconscious they are avowing anything shameful. They are found sanctioning and assisting in schemes of bribery and intimidation, and shrink not from the flagitious revenge of driving a poor man and his family to destitution, for exercising his own undoubted right,—a right which the legislature is incessantly labouring to secure to him, and which is part of the very essence of the constitution. These are the effects of ignorance, and women are often led into these actions from want of reflection on their nature; not often from want of feeling or principle, as an appeal to either constantly proves.

Politics are a very extensive and very various science. It is evidently unfit for all men to be deeply versed in it, since the majority could not be so, except at the expense of their own special duties. It is more for the advantage of society that each

man should be properly instructed in his own business, than that all should be politicians. It is still less needful that women, who have no active political duties to perform, should enter into the depths and subtilties of that science; but there is a certain degree of knowledge on the subject, without which a person can scarcely be deemed a citizen. With far greater justice might it be said, people who have not to calculate almanacks need know nothing of the solar system, than that they who have not to vote or to legislate need know nothing of the social system in which they all move.

There are certain general principles which form the basis of all government, and on which the prosperity, nay, the very existence, of society depends; such as that life and property shall be secured, and that everybody must forego some share of their natural freedom, for the greater security and advantage of all; and there are particular principles which constitute the different forms of government of different nations, such as the monarchical, the democratic, and others. These in a great measure form the national spirit and character. Peace and security depend mainly upon the agreement of the spirit and character of the people with their institutions, and on the unanimity with which they assent to their maintenance. It is surely essential to propriety of social conduct, that people should not be ignorant, either of the knowledge which justifies all government, or of that which serves to cement the society in which we live, and wherein lie all our duties. In a free government, the diffusion of it seems the only

security there is against the crude and extravagant notions of men without knowledge, and full of passion. Can it be for the interest of society, that anybody should be totally destitute of elementary instruction on the subject; though many perhaps must remain so from necessity, either through extreme poverty, meanness of intellect, or that unconquerable aversion to all efforts of thought, by which nature has stamped some people for triflers?

Let us turn our eyes to the condition of a country agitated by faction, and say whether it can be doubted that better instruction would restrain a great deal of its turbulence. On one side we discern passionate resistance to the most obvious improvements; old confuted maxims of misrule defended pertinaciously by men who ought to take the lead in the progress of the times; illiberal designs maintained through dishonest intrigues, which kindle an unnatural and reluctant hatred against a class, which it is the disposition of the people to look up to. On the other side we find furious declamation, regardless of truth or reason, abounding with absurd flattery towards a people brutalized by intemperance and ignorance, and who need not be made more turbulent and conceited than they are: crude theories, generated in the brains of those who mistake their own intolerance of subordination for the spirit of liberty; boasting contempt for moral and religious restraint, by way of philosophy; and vehement advocacy of particular measures, the most complicated and doubtful imaginable, through means, of the mischief and misery of which there is unhappily no doubt at all.

Let any one but contemplate the results of the conflict between such parties, how in the countries most favoured by fortune, the whole fabric may be made to shake with their violence; and let him say, in candour, whether, since the multitude cannot be forced back to the condition of sheep, the wide dissemination of well-grounded elementary knowledge be not urgently wanted; and if so, whether women who have so much control over education and so much influence in society, ought not to be rendered instrumental to that purpose.

Section III.

Influence of Frivolity on Religion.

As every object is discoloured by the medium through which it passes, so is religion by the faults of the mind that receives it.

The whole history of religion, from its first establishment, is most sanguinary. It presents details of every agony that either the human mind or human frame could endure, wrought up to its highest pitch; sometimes inflicted on numbers that appal us by their multitude, and sometimes on victims, whose individual sufferings harrow up our souls. Those errors, in defence of which some men exhibited the most transcendent moral grandeur, and those, for which others stained their souls with the foulest crimes, are alike swept away by the progress of knowledge; many of them appear to us now more like the notions of madmen, than of rational beings. The subtle distinctions, or trivial observances, which

frequently kindled baleful passions, make us wonder how men, capable of great learning and great energy, could at the same time be so childish as to think them of consequence.

But the spirit of persecution is rather smothered than extinguished, and the frivolity seems greater than ever: it is disguising the character of Christianity, and promoting infidelity. They are justifiable, who reject religious interpretations that degrade the God of nature in their eyes: they do not come within the sentence on those who "shun the light, because their deeds are evil;" what they fly from is not light, but "darkness visible," peopled with fantastic and misshapen figures. The crimes of other days have indeed received such a check, that they need not be dwelt upon in a work like the present; but the follies have only adopted a modern dress; they are spreading with the utmost rapidity, and are very much encouraged by the feeble education of women.

Errors which have proved the spring-head of innumerable follies may perhaps have been first promulgated by men of remarkable ability and piety. For an able man is not one in whose mind there is no defect; on the contrary, the greater the mental vigour expended in some directions, the more probable it is there will be some deficiency in others. But if great warmth of feeling accompany great mental exertion, it is next to impossible some point should not be carried to extravagance; thus the men, whose intellectual powers are both very great and very equable, are rare indeed. But the error which the enthusiasm of a vigorous-minded person has

been led to admit, is restrained in its applications by sound sense and knowledge on all other points but the one; he eludes the mischief or absurdity which follows from it, by reasonings somewhat circuitous, and not always very convincing; and thus we find men practically wise, against the tenor, as we think, of their own principles. But their error runs riot in the heads of those who have little knowledge and judgment; neither is it uncommon, in religious matters, to find the error of the teacher become the cardinal point to some of his followers.

So great is the danger on this subject of giving displeasure, that it is necessary to obviate misapprehension or misrepresentation, by avowing most emphatically the persuasion, that no other creed, no other system, is so calculated to raise human nature to its highest perfection, as the Christian doctrines in the simplicity with which they came from their divine author. Seldom has there been any condition so wretched that faith in them could not alleviate, nor any happiness which did not brighten under their influence. But the more earnest the persuasion, that they who reject them reject that which makes most for human perfection, without thereby removing one atom of doubt or perplexity from human condition, the more painful it becomes to perceive the religion discredited by the follies that are sometimes annexed to it; the more deep the regret, when persons who individually excite the utmost love and respect, give their sanction to opinions, that lead to extravagance in weaker heads than their own.

There are some persons, happily not a few, whose whole character is so thoroughly pervaded by true Christian charity, that in them the spirit of intolerance is entirely overruled, though that spirit would be indeed but a natural consequence of some of their tenets. With them the most affectionate friendship is compatible with great difference in opinion; the pleasure of their intercourse is unalloyed by the fear of irritation or undeserved censure; and from them no lukewarmness need be dreaded, where there is a service to be rendered or an anxiety to be shared. The softness and tenderness *Christian feeling* gives to their virtues, render them a blessing and an example to their neighbourhood, and whenever sincere and active assistance for affliction or misery is required, they are the persons to apply to. In applying to others for co-operation in any purpose of utility or benevolence, our proposal must accord with their habits, their tastes, their leisure; or we find they have already done all that they think themselves called on to do, beyond the line of their own interests. As a general rule they may be right: but the earnest Christian has no measure for the claims of his fellow-creatures but the last effort his means and his strength will permit, or the last hour he can spare from his own duties: these virtues, however, are the fruits not of his errors, but of the right feelings and opinions which overrule them. This can scarcely be denied, when it is considered that every sect of Christians, those holding the most opposite dogmas, have produced characters of the same heavenly temper. The opinions, therefore, on which

men differ are not those on which their goodness depends; it must proceed from something that may exist in despite of their errors. Sometimes, the subject of disagreement and animosity has so little connexion with piety or practice, that we might as reasonably make it a test of a man's loyalty, that he should have right notions of the dimensions of his sovereign's palace; every law of obedience and love being really as imperative upon one supposition as upon the other. It is very different, when the nature of an opinion is such that it must affect our feelings and conduct, and it is of serious importance not to entertain ideas that must either corrupt our feelings, or misdirect our efforts. Some errors of this description come within the scope of the present work, because of their prevalence, and that the extravagances they lead to, seem chiefly to arise from want of solid instruction.

It is held that error is guilt, however sincere and earnest the endeavour to seek for truth may be; that salvation depends neither on virtue and piety, nor on Christ's having died for mankind, but on a right *understanding* of the scheme of redemption, and the nature of Christ; that revelation and reason are opposed to each other, so that as the one prevails, the other must be denied; that reason is therefore no test of the truth or the duties of religion*; that every occupation, desire, and pursuit which has not Christ for its immediate object, is either sinful, or else worldly in a sense opposed to religion, and so far a snare to our souls.

* See Note Q. at the end of the volume.

These notions, being once established, naturally lead the attention more to vehement disputations about the meaning of Scripture phrases, than to regulating the feelings and conduct; to attaching extravagant importance to abstruse subtleties, that improve neither mind nor heart; to affixing that odium to involuntary errors which belongs only to intentional guilt; and to fearing, shunning, and stifling the voice of reason, so that the way is opened to the wildest extravagances of imagination or passion; nor does the utmost inconsistency between these doctrines prevent them from passing for special inspirations. When it has once been admitted that reason is no judge of the truths of religion, the folly, or even the absurdity of notions, is no argument against their having come from God. In this state of mind the excitement of emotion passes for the working of the spirit, and a fatal separation is drawn between religion and virtue. Nature and revelation being placed in opposition to each other, nature, moral or physical, is no longer consulted; but it is rather imagined that our minds are opposed to and withdrawn from God, inasmuch as we give them to natural affections and duties; yet natural affections and duties are the laws and appointments of God, and revelation, while it regulates, ought to give them increased sanctity. Thus all knowledge relating to the concerns of human life is regarded with suspicion; and when the knowledge that promotes human happiness is despised, it is no wonder that mere amusement should be utterly condemned: this tends to gloom or severity of temper. Finally,

by these views, religion, instead of adding a new and powerful motive for improving this world in which, by the appointment of God, lie all our duties, is made to consist wholly in the working up of pious emotions and mental excitement, to the exclusion of every object of thought except God or Christ. But nature has so constructed us, that an unbroken continuance of one train of ideas or emotions produces insanity; and every natural condition admits or enforces diversity of thought and occupation: this variety is perfectly consistent with some general and governing principle; the most ruling passion is not without it. Numberless other trains of thought and occupation may divert the mind from day to day, or from hour to hour, but the strength of the predominant principle is proved by the determination, with which other things are all cast aside, when its interests require the sacrifice. This distinction is lost upon the one-sided Christian, who rejects the lessons of nature, in his mistaken interpretation of Scripture. He imagines that the way to be religious is to think of nothing but God, and to have no motive but God; not simply to determine that the will of God shall be his governing principle, and to see that everything he does shall be consistent therewith, but that no other idea shall ever be present to his mind or affections. As well might a mariner fix his eyes and his compass towards the port he was sailing for, but let the sails, rudder, and ropes, all shift for themselves.

The weak and ignorant are peculiarly liable to be infected with these doctrines, and to them they

are peculiarly hurtful. Unable to take a just view of their particular duties, or of the uses and purposes of our natural faculties, creatures of impulse, slaves of circumstances, the pleasures of this hour fill them with vanity, the devotion of the next with enthusiasm or perhaps terror. Charmed by worldly follies, because they are ignorant or idle, and without resistance to vice because they have never learned self-command, they seek to extirpate all the natural emotions and desires which they do not know how to regulate, and so give up the world. But they deceive themselves: their moral defects are not lessened; they have only changed their objects. The frivolity which formerly made trifles absorb them, now spends itself on religion which it degrades. Whatever the former defects of their character, whether selfishness, vanity, pride, ill-temper, indolence, or any other, it remains unconquered, though the manner in which it exhibits itself is different. In one respect they are much worse: formerly they were less blind to their own imperfections; they sometimes suspected they were wrong; now they are quite satisfied they are right; nor can they easily be undeceived, because, when about to examine their hearts and their conduct, the error in their views directs their efforts to a false standard.

Attempting to keep up in themselves and others, a monotony (as it may be called) of idea and feeling which is contrary to nature, they are continually labouring by factitious means, to maintain an excitement of religious emotion which they regard, when they succeed, as the influence of the spirit. The

intrusion of other ideas, which is really the effort of nature to relieve itself from a forced uniformity, is deplored as a sin, and the depression or languor which naturally follows after the excitement of great emotion, is taken for the hidings of God's face, as they call it. It is struggled with as an awful trial, or mourned as a mark of reprobation.

For the number of feeble and innocent creatures who are attracted to these doctrines, and run them to every extravagance, one can feel nothing but indulgence, and it is with anything but a spirit of severity or satire one would wish to approach them; but how is it possible to feel warmly the importance of religion to the woe-worn race of mankind, and see it degraded by its separation from reason, without some attempt to show forth the consequences?

Ought not those abler minds, who sanction the doctrines now censured, to look for a moment at the consequences that follow closely and naturally, from discrediting and disowning the authority of reason, and the necessity of knowledge. Do we not see every artificial contrivance resorted to, to keep up religious excitement,—declamatory addresses to the feelings and imagination, outpourings of devotional egotism, anatomising every emotion and shred of an emotion? This is called searching the heart. Letters, tracts, and sermons, that might as well have been written drunk as sober; and upon the most unfathomable subjects, election, predestination, the inspiration of the spirit, the genera and species of faith? How many rambling effusions do we not

hear, without either principle or progress, or result! like a body in space, on they roll; and we can neither imagine why they ever began, or why they ever should stop. What social meetings, in which mutual self-importance is kept up by mutual flattery! for not only is it delusively pleasing to be one of the select, the superior, the religious world, but the praise mutually exchanged is often really fulsome. Sometimes it is expressed in open compliment sometimes by insinuation, often by the importance attached to everything done, said, or thought. Even censure and reproach feed the morbid appetite for excitement and distinction; they testify the interest the instructor, "the advanced Christian," takes in the transgressor. There is something irresistible in the deep anxiety for one's soul, the importance attached to one's errors, the labour to convince and convert. We might recall the religious gossip which prevails, and which really generates a spirit of spying into the opinions and conduct of other people; the tea and Bible parties, and a score of similar fopperies, in which it is attempted to force the sublime and serious into the forms of the familiar and trivial pursuits, which are really congenial to the spirit of their members.

A great and very dangerous delusion lurks under the seemingly rational plan of renouncing the world: it deserves examination. They who live in the world, that is to say, with the connexions and society into which they are drawn by their position and their duties, have to bear a thousand petty mortifications, rubs, and slights, from the neglect or selfishness of

others; they must live with the unsympathetic; they must sacrifice their wishes, their pursuits, their pleasures, at the call of homely duties, for the performance of which they escape censure, but cannot lay claim to applause; they must bear with long intervals of insipidity and sameness; they must treat the peevish and the trifling with temper and respect; often they must endure being made harshly and needlessly to feel their own deficiencies; and when the passing pleasures that diversify graver duties, are thwarted by the malice, or frustrated by the rivalry of others, they must endure it in secret. All this sounds very harsh, when summed up together, without reference to the trivial or transitory nature of the ills now considered, or taking into account the solid comforts and advantages by which they are balanced. Yet in truth, this is but a picture of common life; daily life and daily duties compel almost every one to bear many such small wrongs and annoyances, without either commendation, or notice. We should only be laughed at for making a merit of such ordinary patience; and a very salutary training it is.

Let us however take but a step in another direction, into the religious world as it is styled, and all this is changed. We escape from a stage where perhaps our own mediocrity consigned us to a somewhat painful struggle; we leave those who galled us by their neglect, our superiors in talents, knowledge, beauty, wealth, rank, and find ourselves suddenly raised by acclamation above them all; their pursuits and endowments contemned as delusions, their pleasures as sins, their virtues as worthless

towards God, and themselves cast out of the pale of sympathy. They are the children of this world; we are the children of light. Here ignorance is hallowed; here loquacity, however wanting in ideas or method, is called a gift—it serves to make an expounder of Scripture. She who has command neither of words nor ideas, may at least have passionate exclamations, vehement feelings, mysterious emotions, "visitings," "experiences," "sweetnesses."

Virtues and vices are here viewed too often through inverted glasses. A woman may be selfish and peevish, full of spiritual pride and ostentatious humility, regardless of the feelings and happiness of her husband and family, bitter in her censures, careless of accuracy in the accusations she makes or receives against religious or political opponents; and yet, if she pour out effusions of pious sentimentality intermixed with Scripture phraseology, go twice a day to church, and call Sunday the Sabbath, she succeeds completely in blinding her society to the magnitude and deformity of her faults. She passes with them for a very evangelical person. It is not because they are willing to sanction those criminal qualities,—this would be a very unjust imputation; but they do not see them, the garb of sanctity utterly misleads their judgment. They think the one thing needful has been secured, and they give credit for many of the good qualities that *ought* to accompany the true faith. These errors are the inevitable consequence of substituting feelings and emotions for the practice of virtue; they are the natural growth of frivolity and ignorance.

That submission to the common crosses and vexations of life already described, those customary sacrifices of the trivial to the important, about which no rational person should ever hesitate, in the self-styled religious world, are made mountains of merit. Attention to sick parents, patience with their faults, charity to the poor, the sacrifice of a religious coterie, to follow some duty in a different part of the country; these are all made known, talked over, written about, and extolled.

Is there not in all this, a want of that simplicity and right-headedness, which solid instruction would give? Those follies are frequently connected with a sincere desire to do and feel right, but it is under the guidance of a frivolized judgment. Patience under small wrongs is a proof only of ordinary good temper; the sacrifices of minor pleasures, to more important considerations, form the distinction between people of principle, and creatures of impulse, —we should not accept praise for them. If they are performed with such a struggle, as to be very difficult, instead of calling for an order of merit, we had better suspect that we have been hitherto overmuch pampered by fortune; and that it is still before us, to learn what life is made of.

Section IV.

Mistaken Aim and Wrong Spirit introduced into Religion.

Independent of the follies commented upon in the last section, the endeavour to make religion a

common topic of conversation is a mistake. Religion is a very serious, a very earnest feeling; it is not natural to introduce it in mixed society, or among persons with whom we have neither intimacy nor confidence. What is our conduct with respect to other deep and serious feelings? Do we ever discuss our sentiments for a father, mother, wife, or husband, except with an intimate friend, and in privacy? If such subjects are introduced in common society, they are touched in the most general manner; if the occasion should require it, a few words may be uttered expressive of the respect or affection we feel, but the subject is dismissed without being sifted: we shrink from expatiating with strangers on sentiments that hold to our heartstrings; and it is reckoned the height of indiscretion to attempt forcing others to do so, where we have no right to confidence. All mankind are so agreed upon this point, that persons who pour out their feelings upon such subjects in general society, are suspected of affectation: our own hearts tell us it is not the character of true feeling to do so. When some particular suitability of character, draws two strangers into unreserved communication of sentiment upon topics of this nature, from that hour something of friendship is commenced between them: years of slow progress have been overleaped at a step*. But the heart

* I beg this passage may not be misapplied, so as to sanction the childish confidences of very young people to their companions, or the effusions of sentimental young ladies, who "swear an eternal friendship" the first time they meet. The comments in the text do not relate to the follies of the young and unformed, but to the errors that prevail among those who have taken their station in society.

that is thus open to every comer is but a common pathway. This is more applicable to religious feelings than to others, for they hold to us by the deepest, the tenderest, and the most completely personal affections of which we are capable, being inseparably interwoven with every sorrow that has torn our hearts with anguish, and every impending evil that dims the face of nature to our eyes, or mingles its discord with her music. If there be a sin or a weakness that wrings our bosom with remorse or shame, or a doubt that disturbs our consolation, the puny hand that stirs the subject may revive its pangs, but cannot allay them. Oh, the boldness of inexperience and ignorance! Who has a right "to draw our frailties from their dread abode?" There is therefore scarcely a subject to be named, less fit for general conversation than religious feelings. Nor is the indiscretion much less in those who, having no duty to perform, provoke discussions upon doctrinal points. We have the experience of many ages to show us, that such discussions do more to generate enmity than further truth; and that as our understandings are very unequal, we cannot all conceive the same truths exactly in the same manner. We should therefore do well to remember that Scripture says, "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." Unhappily very few persons think themselves bound by these texts.

It is a tyranny to attempt extorting the opinions of any man from him, for so great is the pride and intolerance of the present day, that if his views be at

variance with those of his company, they may very likely draw odium or ridicule upon him. But when religious discussions are too long, or too pointedly maintained, they reduce people to the alternative of either incurring that odium or shrinking from the avowal of what they sincerely believe.

Neither have persons of confident tempers, who can brave censure, any right to force forward upon society opinions which may give pain or offence to others, or even shake their reliance upon the faith they have been brought up in. The reason of this is, that though the faith of such persons may in many respects be erroneous, yet it may contain truth enough to sustain their moral principles and their piety; and the objection to attacking their errors in conversation is, that by the attempt we are more likely to create irritation than do good. It is true, that the errors and enmities occasioned by crude speculations, indiscreetly and passionately brought forward, are a slight evil compared with the suppression of free inquiry altogther. Were we reduced to choose between the two, no doubt would exist in the mind of a true philosopher; but that is no argument against controlling the rashness and passion which, as far as they go, counterbalance the benefit of the freedom. Religious discussions in general do more to provoke censure, enmity, and obstinacy than to correct error; for it is often more easy to expose the fallacy of a wrong opinion, than to establish a better one in its pl ce. He ce, (as experience also has shown,) persons who are driven by desultory arguments or ridicule to abandon the opinions they held

sacred in youth, usually become either unhappy or unprincipled. Time, accuracy, full development, and frequent repetition, are essential to establishing truth, and giving it its right influence over the mind.

After all this excitement about doctrinal religion, and these efforts to make religion the sole moving principle of every action, the sole object of thought, what is the effect?—does it produce that steady immoveable faith, that constant feeling, it pretends? Not at all: no people are so constantly lamenting the coldness of their faith, the wandering of their minds, as they who make these attempts. They acknowledge they are in danger, if they trust themselves with an ordinary topic or a worldly companion: they dare as soon encounter the discharge of a cannon at their head, as the arguments of a sceptic; even a physical fact if at variance, as they think, with some passage in Scripture, fills them with dismay. They want that ordinary fortitude of mind to feel that a religion, which has been the support of the best code of morals, and the highest civilization in the world, has lived and prospered, not because it has never been mingled with a human error, but because it has had in it a strength to triumph over many. If it have any such excellence as to justify their thinking it the appointment of God, they need not surely reject it for so inconclusive a reason, as finding its propagators impressed with the opinions of their day on subjects of natural science. It is sad to see Christians shaken, as in the days of Galileo, by objections such as those, and not at all disturbed in their faith by the furious and malevolent passions

which they believe it sanctions*. If religion is to be discussed it is better it should be in books than in general conversation. But even here there is danger of doing more harm to the heart than good to the head; for the habit of reading controversial works and attending to disputation is adverse to the spirit of piety and benevolence. "What opinion is there so reasonable, so plausible, that it may not be shaken by the spirit of controversy? And on the other side, what is there so absurd that it may not be maintained by special pleading? When a man has once persuaded himself that a thing is true or false, the attraction of dispute rivets him to his own notion, and soon he seeks nothing more than to beat his adversary by means of subtilty, especially when the question itself is obscure, and by its very nature enveloped in mystery†." Controversy is therefore peculiarly improper for the unlearned, who not being used to refined speculations, are easily perplexed by such subjects. It would be well if the unlearned would reflect that theology is not religion, but only science. Religion is a practical principle: a man might be a profound theologian without a spark of religion, and an excellent Christian with very simple knowledge. If Christianity be really intended for the poor and simple, how can it be supposed that their thinking rightly on the subtle questions that have divided the Christian world can be essential to their salvation? There may be a great many truths which it is not necessary for every-

* See Note R. at the end of the volume.

† Arnobius, cited by Chastellux.

body to know, and yet it does not follow that speculative errors are immaterial. There is perhaps no error upon any subject that, followed out in all its bearings, would not produce some evil in some way; it is therefore quite proper that the clergy and other persons, who have knowledge and ability for deep speculations, should turn their minds to such subjects, but surely it is not desirable to enlist the half learned in their cause. There are many speculative errors, the bearing of which on the feelings or conduct of mankind is so very remote, that the world in general is neither endangered by adopting the error, nor able to apply the truth to any valuable purpose when they hear it. But the temper gets heated and the judgment bewildered by controversy; and after all, no heresy can be so antichristian as that hatred and animosity are consistent with religion. The notions that we entertain of the Creator, which influence our feelings towards Him and our conduct to each other, concern all mankind. But there are others which, however true, can produce only a reverential assent. With regard to these, all the pious affections, love, trust, resignation, gratitude, result as much from the theory of one theologian as from that of another. The connexion of right affections with the theory, sometimes exists only in the imagination of the controversialist; even when real, there is an almost impassable gulph between the assent of the unlearned to such abstract doctrines, and their application to sentiment and conduct. A thorough understanding of the system, which ages of metaphysical subtlety have elaborated

from a few texts of Scripture, will not be found the surest means to render mankind truly religious. There seems somewhat in the subject of religious controversy, that provokes the spirit of arrogance and uncharitableness. None assume infallibility either for themselves or their teachers; but if they admit the possibility of their being in error, all that they can plead, is the earnest sincerity with which they sought for truth. In such a case, would they not feel it to be a gross and unchristian injustice, to be pursued with vituperation and hatred? With what face, then, can they inflict them on others? On what grounds do they assume that they are the only people whose mistakes will be pardoned? How can they be so misled, as to suppose they can know what the errors of others proceed from?—whether some moral perversity, or the infirmity of human intellect? No one can be absolutely sure he is right: he can only be sure he believes himself so; and, therefore, he should never attempt to enforce truth by any means but persuasion, nor then, without recollecting he may have need to be a learner, when he is setting up for a teacher.

This spirit of candour and liberality is of the greater importance to society, because we cannot lay down any absolute rule by which the toleration of opinions should be regulated. As the spreading of virtue depends very much on the desire of men to possess esteem and confidence, there is no way of restraining licentious and extravagant notions more effectual than the fear and distrust they excite. But that, though a wholesome restraint, is at the same

time a severe punishment; it is therefore important not to learn by early prejudice, to attach distrust and odium where they are not due, to opinions perfectly compatible with virtue and piety, or to quiet and unoffending persons, who never take the licence that, we assume, their opinions would lead to. We have no right to punish people till they actually offend, but to distrust or suspect them might be unavoidable. A man who professed that he regarded the right of property as an oppression, and that every one had as good a right to what he could get as its proper owner, could not indeed be justly transported till he had committed some robbery; an act of which, after all, he might prove as incapable as the most right-minded among us; but suspicion would be unavoidable: we should require to know him a little before we should trust him; we would not hire a servant who held such a tenet; and we could scarcely blame those who locked their strong-box, whenever he came into the house. A man who disclaims the authority of religion is much in the same condition. But further, he cannot profess his opinions without also giving great pain. If he come into our company to show his contempt for our deepest emotions, to scoff at the faith we profess—our consolation in sorrow, our support under trials, our hope in the future, when the present is wretched—we have a right to avoid his society as if he were treating our father with disrespect, or embittering our tenderest affections with doubts and calumnies. Nay, though our feelings partake, in either case, of superstition or of weakness, they may not be outraged and the offender expect to retain our

regard. He who would wean us from what he considers a wrong worship, or a weak human attachment, must approach the subject with seriousness and caution. If he disregard this condition, and moreover, if in deriding the opinions which others hold sacred, he have nothing better proved or more beneficial to give in their place, his claim on the kindness and regard of his fellow-citizens is reduced very low: it is reduced to the least that Christians can ever think due to those who live without violating the laws. What indeed can men expect but to be shunned if they wound the feelings of others—and what but to forfeit their confidence, if they disclaim religious sentiments, the great bond and sanction of morals? But to impose such inflictions on those who never seek to offend others,—to attach suspicion or odium to differences of opinion on points the most trivial, or the most obscure, and on which few can agree—or to questions that can be tried by no other standard but the judgment of the disputants, is both unjust and ungenerous. It is no answer to say they are brought to the test of Scripture, because it is to Scripture that both parties appeal equally; and it is to the opinion of each party, as to the right interpretation of Scripture, that the question at last is referred.

Are not the gates of variance and hatred, recrimination and resentment, opened wide by this spirit of controversy? Are not those feelings urged on by the pride and love of power inherent in human nature? And though the arm of the law withhold the sword and the dungeon, the fagot and the

wheel, do not the parties sit down, their bosoms boiling with such passions as we may picture in chained demons?

We need but recall to mind the infuriated harangues of those apostles of discord and hatred, who travel from town to town to call public meetings, and kindle the flames of animosity against all who dissent from their creed—to spread the scandal of their sins, and calumniate them by imputations of detestable tenets, denied and repudiated over and over again, by word and deed;—leaders who teach us to hate our neighbours and applaud ourselves, to see others' faults and be blind to our own, to strain at gnats and swallow camels, to dissever society into factions of deadly foes; and who are themselves split into as many discordant parties, as there are shades of difference in opinion, being held together only by the bond of common rancour.

Were these foul passions lamented as uncontrollable, or even palliated as weaknesses, we might feel less indignant; but it is hard not to recoil in disgust, when we hear it assumed that they proceed from that charity which cares for men's souls. Why do not the wise, the pious, and the benevolent men, who are to be found in every Christian sect, unite more openly to disclaim and discountenance these perversions, so opposed to their own judgment and practice? Is their unostentatious and zealous virtue, drawn from the pure doctrines of Scripture, only to be scattered over society, like autumnal lights across the landscape, touching with beauty whatever it falls on, but still leaving the storms of error and passion

to disturb and darken all around? Some irritation may perhaps be excusable against people who, in spite of remonstrance, persist in what we think dangerous; but if at the bottom there were a real flow of benevolence, it would be a relief, to be assured of the virtue and piety that may coexist with that error. On the contrary, there are not many things that make these fierce controversialists more splenetic; they seem almost sorry the virtue is there, where the right faith is not. The goodness that springs not from their own doctrines they despise altogether: they will not judge the tree by its fruits, but the fruits by the tree; and to be right upon doctrinal points, they place far above the practice of the noblest virtues. This leads directly to that false measure of right and wrong already discussed, whereby great stress is laid upon comparatively trivial points because they indicate certain opinions: they are the colours of the party. The points may be such as it is very useful and proper to attend to, but which it is not very culpable to leave undone; they are but the tithings of mint, anise, and cummin, when compared with the "weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy."

Differences on these matters lead to a violation of the charities of life; and friendships and family ties are severed. Children fly the society or contemn the authority of parents respected by every one else; or rob their old age of the remnant of comfort the sorrows of life may have left them, by a marked disapprobation of their habits and a pointed adoption of contrary rules of life. "And she was unto

him as a daughter," says the Prophet, when seeking the tenderest image of confiding affection; but we may see even daughters performing formal attentions with mock meekness, stamping on every act, by their manner, "This I do, I the righteous, not from affection or respect, but because it is my duty to wash the sinner's feet." They exhibit an ostentatious indifference to the society, the pursuits, the amusements of their benighted parent; they are as dutiful and as unsympathetic as becomes a spiritual heroine. In other instances, women too simple and right-hearted for such conduct, still misled by a false principle, tease their parents and seniors with instruction and exhortations, till irritation ensues; and though affection remain, the comfort of the family circle is destroyed; the household gods have fled!

Nor is it solely by poisoning the fount of private and general benevolence this contracted religion operates: it creates a predisposition to think ill of the motives of others, and thereby prepares the occasions for indulging its bitterness. If we describe a delightful character or a generous act, the first emotion is not the glow of admiration, but to question whether it sprung from the right motive. Surely that is not characteristic of the charity which thinketh no evil!

Even in that branch of benevolence where the goodness of this class of Christians is most conspicuous, attention to the poor, their virtue even there is tainted by their defects; for their efforts are not directed to the selection of the most deserving objects, but of those who most agree with them in

opinion. This may be an excellent rule for choosing a post-chaise companion, but not for dispensing relief, nor for promoting the cause of virtue and order in society.

Leaving the contemplation of feverish excitement, fantastic and complicated subtleties, angry zeal, and dissocial passions, I turn to the records of memory, where are graven for ever the lineaments of one who was indeed a disciple of Christ; and whose character seemed the earthly reflection of his. Wherever there was existence her benevolence flowed forth, never enfeebled by the distance of its object, yet flushing the least of daily pleasures with its warmth. Her views rose to the most comprehensive moral grandeur; while her calm, uncompromising energy against sin, was combined with an ever-flowing sympathy for weakness and woe. She spent her life in one continued system of active beneficence, in which her business, her projects, her pleasures, were but so many varied forms of serving her fellow-creatures. Never for a moment did a reflection for herself cross the current of her purposes for them. Her whole heart so went with their distresses and their joys, that she scarcely seemed to have an interest apart from theirs. The simplicity of her character was peculiarly striking, in the unhesitating readiness with which she received, I might even say, with which she grasped at the correction of her errors, and listened to the suggestions of other persons. One undivided desire possessed her mind, it was not to seem right, but to do right.

What heightened the resemblance between her

and the model she followed, was, that her counsels came not from a bosom that had never been shaken with the passions she admonished, or the sorrows she endeavoured to soothe. Her character was one of deep sensibility, and passions strong even to violence; but they were controlled and directed by such vivid faith as has never been surpassed. Her long life had tried her with almost every pang, that attends the attachment of such beings to the mortal and the suffering, the erring and perverse; and when those sorrows came, that reached her heart through its deepest and most sacred affections, the passion burst forth, that showed what the energy of that principle must have been, that could have brought such a mind to a tenour of habitual calmness and serenity. When every element of anguish had been mingled together in one dreadful cup, and reason for a week or two was tottering in its seat, she was seen to resume the struggle against the passions that for a moment had conquered. The bonds that attached her to life were indeed broken for ever, but she recovered her heart-felt submission to God, and she learned by degrees, again to be happy in the happiness she gave.

It was this depth and strength of feeling that gave her a power over others, seldom surpassed, I believe, by any other mortal. In her the erring and the wretched found a sure refuge from themselves. The weaknesses that shrink from the censure or the scorn of others, could be poured out to her as to one whose mission upon earth was to pity and to heal; for she knew the whole range of human in-

firmity, and that the wisest have the roots of those frailties that conquer the weak. But in restoring the fallen to their connexion with the honoured, she never held out a hope that they might parley with their temptations, or lower their standard of virtue: a confession to her cut off all self-delusion as to culpable conduct or passions. While she inspired the most uncompromising condemnation of the thing that was wrong, she never advised what was too hard for the "bruised reed;" she chose not the moment of excitement to rebuke the misguidings of passion, nor of weakness to point out the rigour of duty. But strength came in her presence: she seemed to bring with her irresistible evidence that anything could be done, which she said, ought to be done. The truths of religion, stripped of fantastic disguises, appeared at her call with a living reality, and for a time, at least, the troubles of life sank down to their just level. When our sorrows are too big for our own bosoms, if others receive them with stoicism it repels all desire to seek relief at their hands, but the calmness with which she attended to the effusions and perturbations of grief, seemed the earnest of safety from one who had passed through the storm. The deep and tender expression of her noble countenance suggested that feeling, with which a superior being might be supposed to look down from heaven on the anguish of those who are still in the toils, but know not the reward that awaits them.

Everything petty seemed to drop off from her mind; but she imbibed the spirit of essentials so perfectly, she followed it throughout with such

singleness of heart, that its influence affected her minutest actions, not by an effort of studied attention, but with the steadiness of a natural law. Nature and revelation she regarded as the two parts of one great connected system; she always contemplated the one with reference to the other; her views were therefore all practical and free from confusion, and nothing that promoted the welfare of this world could cease to be a part of her duty to God. It was her maxim that the motive dignified the action, however trivial in itself; and all the actions of her life were ennobled by the motive of obedience to an all-powerful Being, because He is the pure essence of wisdom and goodness. In the virtues of those who had not the consoling belief of the Christian, she still saw the handwriting of God, that cannot be effaced from a generous mind; and she used to dwell with delight on the idea that the good man, from whose eyes the light of faith was withheld in this life, would arise with rapture in the next, to the knowledge that a happiness was in store for him, which he had not dared to believe.

It was not the extent of her intellectual endowments that made her the object of veneration to all who knew her; it was her extraordinary moral energy. The clear and vigorous view she took of every subject arose chiefly from her habit of looking directly for its bearing on virtue or happiness; she saw the essential at a glance, and could not be diverted from the truth by a passion or a prejudice. Hence, also, her lofty undeviating justice: her regard to the rights of others was so scrupulous,

that every one within reach of her influence reposed on her decisions with unhesitating trust; nor would the certainty, that the interests of those she loved best were involved, have cast a shadow of doubt over her stainless impartiality.

She could be deceived, for she was too simple and lofty always to conceive the objects of base minds:—

> And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
> At wisdom's gate, and to simplicity
> Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill,
> Where no ill seems.—*Paradise Lost.*

Nevertheless, she generally read the characters of artifice and insincerity with intuitive quickness; though it was often believed she was duped by those, whom she saw through completely. Of this she was aware, but she was so exempt from all desire to prove her sagacity, that she never cared to correct the misconception; and she held that it was neither useful nor quite justifiable to expose all the pretences we may discover, till it became necessary to set the unwary on their guard.

She never renounced the innocent pleasures or pursuits of life, nor the proprieties of a distinguished station; though she partook so little of its luxuries, that she could pass from the splendour of her own establishment to one the most confined, apparently without sensibility to the change. Wherever she moved she inspired joy and cheerfulness, yet she was by no means unreserved except to those she tenderly loved, and it was surprising how any manner so gentle, could at the same time oppose a

barrier so impassable to the advances of the unworthy. She enjoyed the beauty of nature with passion. Her mind at an advanced age had all the elasticity and animation of the prime of life; and she could be led to forget half the night in the excitement of conversation. Happy were the hours spent with her in the discussion of every subject that could call forth her opinions, and her wide knowledge of the eventful times in which she had lived!—hours that exalted the feelings, informed the understandings, and animated the playfulness of younger minds, who found that forty years of difference between their age and hers, took nothing from their sympathies, but added a new and rare delight to their intercourse.

But she is gone! To those who knew her, her counsels are silent and her place void, but there remains the distinct consciousness, that to them had been given a living evidence of the true Christian spirit; for if hers were not true, then may error be more excellent than truth! Far distant, and with unequal steps, they endeavour to follow her course: and perhaps the distaste with which they turn from the defective and ill-proportioned models that are forced on their admiration, is scarcely consistent with the charity she always taught.

Section V.

On the Authority of Reason.

This work has extended much beyond the limits originally designed, but it cannot be properly con-

cluded without some further remarks on the doctrine, that religion may be opposed to reason. That doctrine strikes at the root of almost every improvement in mind or morals. If error creep into any other pursuit of the mind it can only be combated by reason; but there are few subjects of much extent that are not, in some manner, connected with religious opinions; and, when such union exists how shall we hope for truth, if that which guides us in one part of the inquiry is supposed to mislead us in the rest?—what if the authority of reason be disowned, and even regarded with fear and suspicion? "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" It is an opinion that opens the way to every extravagance, and if it were taken in its fullest extent, a dog might as well be a religious animal as a man. So long as this notion prevails, religion will continue liable to be degraded by puerile superstitions, that will endanger its acceptance by sensible and conscientious persons. It could scarcely hold possession of so many minds, without some confusion of idea between things that are only unaccountable to our reason, and those that are contrary to it, or between reason itself and reasoning. With respect to the first, it would be preposterous for so short-sighted a being as man, whose whole life is insufficient to fathom the mysteries of any one branch of science, to dispute the truth of everything he cannot account for: it is perfectly consistent with reason, to believe in the existence of things which baffle all conjecture, to know why or how they are brought to pass. It is therefore reasonable to

suppose that such things may be found in religion as well as in nature. But to be opposed to, or at variance with reason, is very different. Whatever is really contrary to reason is absurd, and whatever is reduced to an absurdity is brought to the most complete refutation possible. To maintain that religion may be at variance with reason, is therefore to maintain that religion may be an absurd thing. It does not get rid of the difficulty to assume that it is the religious doctrine which is the standard of truth, and the reason of man which is wrong; that is to say, that in the same manner as certain diseases give false perceptions of sense, so human reason may have false perceptions as to truth. To assume that the very faculty of reason is, by its own nature, at variance with truth, is to destroy at one blow, the only power by which we discern that Christianity has a better claim to credit, than the wildest fables of the Hindoos. It is in vain to struggle against this conclusion, by arguing that the office of reason is to examine the proofs of revelation, and having once ascertained their validity, that its office then ceases; that it has led to a greater than itself, the decisions of which must overrule all other evidence. But this argument will not stand inquiry. Would any one pretend, that if a being possessed of superhuman powers had come upon earth, and preached nothing but folly and vice, that it would have been the same duty to obey him as the Author of our religion? And why not? Surely because he could not have rendered his mission credible to us, being so contrary to that reason which God has given us by

which to judge all other things. Supernatural powers in a wicked, malevolent being could only have established the popular notion, that evil spirits were permitted to infest the earth, but could not have given to their possessor the authority of that moral sanction, by which alone, obedience is converted from the submission of fear, to a religious feeling. If indeed we could be made certain that a command, which was contrary to our reason, came from God, we should submit to it of course; but this is evidently impossible. If we may be sure of anything, it is, that we were given reason for our guidance, and that He who gave it, will not give us another rule at variance therewith.

It does not follow, that each person is to make his own individual opinions the sole test of right and wrong, true and false, good and bad. Not only is it right to defer to Scripture, but in a great many cases to human authority. A man might as well prefer a watch of his own construction to that of the best watchmaker, as trust to the results of his own reasoning, when they were at variance with those of the best authorities. But to apply to the faculty of reason, what is true only of reasoning, is to confound our hands with our workmanship. Reasoning implies a series of propositions, in which one truth is drawn out of another, each consisting, perhaps, of several ideas. We feel that it is easy for error to creep into so complicated a process, and for a result to be brought out, at variance not only with revelation, but with facts of indisputable certainty. To object, on this account, to reason itself, is to cut off our

hands that we may not be awkward. The facility with which we err is a strong argument for the assiduous cultivation of reason, whereby more people learn to use it correctly, and are able to disseminate right notions among those who must take a great deal on trust. It requires a good degree of instruction to perceive the extent of our own ignorance, that is, to see when a truth is dependent on many more circumstances than we are acquainted with, and when, on the contrary, it is one which we may very fairly be said to know; and yet, without this degree of instruction, we are always in danger; in the first case, of drawing false inferences, in the other, of overlooking the force of truths which practically cannot be doubted. It is curious to observe how unconscious people sometimes are of their want of clear ideas, even while arguing with great confidence. But whatever the risks of error in the use of reason, it may be affirmed that though a "little learning be a dangerous thing," none at all is worse.

The prejudice against reason sometimes insinuates itself, in a modified form, into minds of a superior order. When arguments, which cannot be answered, are advanced against some opinion which they have been brought up to reverence, they dismiss them as proceeding from what they call "the pride of human reason;" but it is a sad mistake in good and otherwise clear minds, to suppose that bringing religious doctrines to the test of reason is a mark of pride. It is no proof of humility to believe anything without reason; and earnest, cautious inquiry into truth is no proof of pride. There is

indeed in some people, such a thing as conceited arrogance, which tempts them to seek distinction by affecting to doubt what satisfies other people, as if they were more clear-sighted than anybody else; whereas, it is not uncommon to find, that their cavils and objections had all been considered and rejected as unfounded. True philosophers are aware that in the formation of opinions of a moral and practical nature, subtleties and trivial objections must be often disregarded, and the great preponderance of probability allowed in preference. The vanity of disbelieving what the vulgar believe, and criticising what others admire, leads sometimes to a sceptical, sometimes to a paradoxical turn of mind; the first is seldom earnest, the second seldom right. In these cases we may see the pride, but not the reason: it is utterly unphilosophical to have any object at heart, in our inquiries, except pure and simple truth; if there be pride in that, it is a pride of the most honest and generous nature.

What, on the contrary, can happen if we are taught to associate the idea of reason with pride? shall we not learn to dread the search for truth, and listen only to what confirms our own preconceived notions? Even in reading Holy Writ, shall we not draw from it any doctrine that seems to confirm our own prejudices? May we not by this system shut our eyes against the study of creation and of mankind? then ignorance and credulity will be exalted into merits, and at this point the way is laid open to barbarism; civilization must retrograde, and the vices and absurdities of the middle ages return. As

well might we say, that the practice of industry betrayed want of reliance upon God for support, as that the exercise of reason showed want of reliance on his word. It is curious that the fact of our Saviour's practice should be so often overlooked: he constantly appealed to the reason of his disciples, by parables that *enforced* the exertion of it. Some religious persons imagine, that relying on reason leads to overturning the deference due to authority in general, and hence, perhaps, even that which is due to Scripture. But they forget that deference to proper authority is as much a lesson of reason as any other: the greater the confidence we place in reason, the greater will be our deference to those, who have brought theirs to the highest perfection; and the greater our mistrust of our own ignorance or incapacity will probably be. In common discourse we are accustomed to say, we appeal from reason to authority or experience, as if reason were held to be opposed to both; but this is merely a colloquial form: the appeal is not from reason, but from some particular reasoning, and it might be paraphrased somewhat as follows: "There is one who knows more of this matter than you do, who thinks differently, therefore you may be leaving out some consideration that alters the case;" or, "Experience shows that things do not fall out as you say, or according to your reasoning; there are therefore some facts of which you are ignorant, and which would account for the difference;" or this, "There is some fallacy in your argument which I am not acute enough to unravel, but I can see that facts, or authorities who

know better than either of us, are opposed to your conclusions, and therefore the error is probably in you:" the appeal, therefore, is not truly from reason, but from bad reasoning, or what is suspected to be such, to what is believed to be better. As the great body of mankind cannot be deep inquirers, it is right they should be trained to reverence authority and take a good deal upon trust, for it is good reasoning in them, to prefer the decisions of the informed to those of the ignorant, that is, to their own; but it is a dreadful lesson, to teach them that reason itself is a snare; few things can tend more to increase their natural conceit and render them indocile to their superiors.

Another source of the fear of reason, which misleads so many persons, is seeing that doubt is more or less an accompaniment of moral inquiries. They imagine they shall preserve the minds of others, and their own from its discomfort and danger, by throwing discredit on the use of reason; they believe that a firm faith in religion will more than supply its place. But by this course they dispose the mind to the reception of corrupting superstitions; and if they ensure the name of Christianity, it is at the expense of its spirit and uses; perhaps they succeed in exciting a passionate aversion to the name of idolatry or heresy, but their own religion becomes nearly as degraded. An enthusiast may possibly have more stedfast, unhesitating faith than a reasoning person; and as doubt is an uneasy condition, even in the slightest degree, this so far gives him an advantage; but it is overbalanced by the general

corruption of religion which it engenders. Without hesitation we may say, that doubt is an essential law of our present existence, and many of the most beautiful effusions of the inspired writers, are their mournings over the darkness and ignorance in which we are left. The whole moral world is carried on, accompanied more or less in all its departments, by one form or another of that painful imperfection: we do nothing, we hope nothing, with certainty of the result; we rear our children in doubt whether they will live and respond to our efforts; we send them forth to foreign climes, unknowing whether they will ever arrive there; we do not know that we shall gather the fruits we have planted, or receive the wages for which we labour. Everything that can either be or not be, is attended by doubts, from the faintest shade distinguishable from absolute certainty, up to the indeterminable chances that make us giddy with the issues that are at stake. Yet the fall of the die, and the course of the mote that is carried by the eddy are as certain, according to their laws, as the movements of the planets, only they are incalculable by us.

If anything should have been placed beyond the limits of this darkness, we naturally think it should have been the truths of religion; yet it is not so. In this respect, as in all others throughout the moral government of the world, the prevalence of the law of doubt is maintained. It is felt by experience, it is announced in Scripture, "We see through a glass darkly;" and a greater than he who spoke those words has declared of God, "Ye cannot know him."

He is spoken of as a God that "hideth himself," and whose "footsteps are not known." We are told there will be a time when we shall know, "even as we are known;" but it is not now, and it is a sort of rebellion against the ordinances of God, to seek to escape from the uneasiness of this condition, by throwing away our reason; that faculty which he has given us for a guide, and appointed to regulate all the active principles of our nature. Before we act with such desperation, it would be well to reflect that our faculties themselves are constituted with relation to this very condition: a condition in which certainty was the rule of life, would require faculties and feelings of a different nature.

Since there was such a being as man to be created, a condition of uncertainty was essential to his nature. If all doubt were removed, hope and fear, those springs of our present existence, would be banished, or at least so altered in their nature, that we should no longer recognize them as the same. Supposing the result of everything to be perfectly discoverable, the change in human motives and actions would be so great, we cannot picture to ourselves what the effects would be. This is true also in respect of religion: if the "shadows, clouds, and darkness," which rest upon a future state were removed, and our happiness there as evident to our understanding, as our existence here is to our senses, the peculiar nature of that exercise which is given to our virtue at present, would be totally altered. It is clear there would be no more virtue in forbearing from vice, and in doing well, with a reward immense and

indisputable before our eyes, than there now is, in choosing a large fortune instead of a small one. The condition of doubt gives a very peculiar exercise to the character and faculties, in whatever light we view it. In human life, a man who never doubts is one who never thinks; his boldness is mere stupidity; but in a reasoning person, the effect of doubt is to make him call up many ideas with their attendant emotions, compare different evils, calculate different chances, prepare for different trials, acquire caution, foresight, vigilance; and when he proceeds to action his firmness and constancy are true fortitude.

These considerations do not affect the question, whether a state of doubt be better or worse than one of certainty. Had certainty been given in this temporary existence, we may presume that faculties and feelings adapted to that condition would have been given also. The present purpose is only to show, that if it be the will of the Creator that such a creature as man should exist, the degree of uncertainty in which he has been placed is an essential part of the plan. There is an evident correspondence between his faculties and his condition; it is therefore futile to attempt, by any resistance to the authority of reason, to evade so extensive, and so fixed a law of God, as that the knowledge which is to move us to action and guide our conduct, shall be mingled with doubt in various forms and degrees. In every evil to which Providence has left us liable, the office of our reason is to reduce it to the least; the evil of doubt as well as others. What can we expect by neglecting or disclaiming the assistant

with which nature has provided us? Temporary enthusiasm at first, misconduct in the end. Reason can assist us to reduce our uncertainties to the least, by the discovery of every circumstance that can give well-grounded confidence; by distinguishing doubtfulness from disproof; and above all, by accustoming our minds to give due weight to probability so as to avoid vacillation in conduct, for we know that vacillation and inconsistency lead to ruin. In proportion as perfect proof is deficient, the evidence of probability rises in importance; and the more we cultivate reason, the more strongly we shall believe, that the opinions which are most extensively and permanently useful, probably contain the most truth; we shall therefore be careful not to abandon them, because we cannot disentangle them from all perplexity. Perceiving in the moral world, how much it is appointed for man to be governed by probability, we learn to follow, with firmness and constancy, the path we have decided on as the best; and he who does not in religion, that which he knows to be right in every other branch of his conduct, is acting inconsistently with his own reason, and with a law of his nature.

These reflections may be here brought to a close. The press abounds with moral works, some of them productions of great merit, but they are outnumbered by those that are feeble and ineffective, or full of prejudices and inconsistent with each other. Those addressed to women are mostly instructions how to creep quietly through life, void of offence: this is not very inspiring: they are read, assented

to, and forgotten. We all have parts to act in society, which, however small individually, are collectively of great importance—

Sands form the mountain, moments make the year.

Errors, that taken separately deserve little odium, acting through numbers entail vices that startle us by their magnitude. To me it appeared, that to exhibit some of the social and national operations of luxury, frivolity, and ignorance, would superadd to the desire of self-improvement the incitement of a great motive, and the efficacy belonging to clear and consistent views. The best way to move people in favour of any course of action, is to prove its importance.

That man will never be better at one time than at another, is a theory contradicted by all the experience of history. It rests on a confusion of ideas in comparing the merit of his efforts in different stages of civilization, which may be equal, but forgetting the different effects the same efforts produce, according as he rises from a higher or lower level of general opinion and practice. He is assuredly better for every step, by which virtue becomes so established as to cease having the merit of difficulty.

I have endeavoured to show how some evils may be restrained, without changes too great to be practicable, or virtue too pure to be expected. It is evident that the class of defects to which this work chiefly relates, can be very imperfectly corrected, without improving the education of women, and also raising their condition. The last is, indeed, almost a necessary consequence of the other: the three pur-

poses hold inseparably together. The spirit of the age is much in favour of that sex. The effects of their depression, and of the feeble education they receive, have been put forward by many writers of name and authority: but it has been done in scattered passages, which produce little more than momentary sympathy; or if the subject of the female condition have been taken up by writers of the same sex, it has been too often treated, I am sorry to say, with either timidity or passion. In this attempt, there has been a constant and earnest endeavour to avoid both; to direct the ambition of women to sane and useful purposes which must raise their condition, because they will benefit society; and to take a practical step towards those ends, by inducing them to educate themselves. Their influence is far from being disputed, perhaps it is sometimes overrated: but still it exists and must work good or evil. If neglected, it will scatter the seeds of evil far beyond the place of its own growth; but if it is to bring forth its best fruits, it demands more stirring motives than the feeble morality that contents itself with abstaining from direct criminality, and bolder guidance than an education that confines the views to the regulation of petty proprieties.

If anything urged in behalf of women tends to taking them out of their true sphere, I wish that it may be promptly and completely refuted; for nothing can be for the real good of society, that is not built upon nature and reason; but it cannot be admitted that the interests of one part of society may, without any necessity, be lawfully sacrificed to those of

another. Such a misfortune may occur, when the confusion of human affairs brings about a collision of interests; but it can never acquire the authority of a principle.

The measure of the rights of women must be sought for in the real advantage of society at large; it must increase with their own intellectual and moral progress; for the influence of worth and intelligence is nearly irresistible.

As the peculiar office of man is to govern and defend society, that of woman is to spread virtue, affection, and gentleness through it: she has a direct interest in softening and humanizing the other sex. Man is too rugged to be even just towards those whom he only loves, but does not respect: he is too powerful to be swayed by those whom he only respects, but does not love. The empire of woman must be won, not solely through his sense of justice, but by the grace and delicacy, the tenderness and purity she diffuses through life; but her rights will neither add dignity to her social influence, nor bring practical security to her domestic station, except as they are found really to promote the virtue and happiness of society.

NOTES.

Note A, (p. 80.)

I am unwilling to insert anything in the text, different in the slightest degree from the theory of Butler, or the inferences strictly deducible from it. But when we consider the great acuteness our senses acquire by practice, whenever the *sensations* are accompanied by active *attention*, it seems more precise, to say that the effect of exerting our faculties actively, is to increase sensibility to such impressions as are the direct objects of attention: those only, to which that active power is *not* directed, lose their vivacity by repetition. Painters have greater sensibility to, and keener perceptions of colours, form, and beauty, than other men, because active attention is directed to those properties. The sensibility of persons accustomed to visiting the haunts of wretchedness, for the purpose of relieving it, is diminished as to the exhibitions of suffering, but heightened as to the satisfaction of relieving it: the first impressions come to them without any control from their own will; the second are associated with active efforts; it is the latter the mind is seeking for.

It is not pretended, either here or in the text, to

give a full solution of all the questions that arise on the nature of habit: such indeed is not the profession of Butler himself: neither are all the phenomena presented by habit examined, nor is it certain that it is in all cases whatever attended by the effects herein attributed to it. To a metaphysician, investigating the nature of the mental faculties, this would be a great defect; but in a moralist, whose sole object is to establish principles of conduct, it is sufficient to give value to his theory, that it reduces to practical rule a great number of important facts in the conduct of life and education. Nothing more is assumed in this work, than to generalize the effects which *experience has proved* to flow from habit, if not uniformly, in so many cases and so certainly, that they may be relied on as safely as any other rule which regulates human life, all of which are liable more or less to exceptions.

Note B, (p. 83.)

Particular attention should be paid to the distinction between *practical* and *active* habits. The latter expression is distinguished from and opposed to passive habits; but a practical habit, means the habit which we practise, whether it be one of action, or of passive indulgence. It is necessary to keep this distinction clearly in the mind, as it is essential to the right apprehension of the theory and its consequences.

NOTE C, (p. 84.)

The difficulty of making men act with common prudence in cases of great epidemics, the debauchery and villany related of people during those scourges, during earthquakes, storms at sea, and other conditions in which death is impending, are not exceptions to this statement, but confirmations of it; for it is only the serious and reflecting, whose practical regard to their own mortality (as said by Butler) will be strengthened by daily instances of death. Familiarity with scenes of death will not alone stir men to right conduct, who have never taken thought of their own responsibility, and who are too selfish to feel any solicitude for those whom their death may leave destitute. These cases are perfectly parallel to those previously adduced; as the passive emotions of fear and of pity are weakened by familiarity, so may the spectacle of daily mortality produce callousness to the awful impressions which death should occasion: but as the active principles of caution and of beneficence, by being repeatedly exercised, grow stronger and stronger, so will the religious relations between a good life and death be kept in the mind, and lead to good acts in considerate persons. The cheerfulness with which impending death is often attended, and the vigilant piety and prudence which it excites at the same time, are too frequently witnessed in ordinary life, to be at all questioned.

Note D, (p. 86.)

This passage is erroneously worded: our passive habits are not weakened, but strengthened, by exercise, because the very essence of habit is to gather strength, whatever the habit may be. Neither has it been ever pretended, that active habits gathered strength more than passive ones,—but that *practical* habits would be strengthened, whatever the thing practised might be. (See Note B.) It is the *impressions on our senses and feelings* that grow weak by repetition, while the desire for the excitement, and the habit of indulging in it, are becoming irresistible. This, indeed, is implied in the use afterwards made of the doctrine by Mr. Fellowes, notwithstanding his misstatement; but the inaccuracy tends to confuse the whole theory, and it is scarcely excusable in a serious writer.

Note E, (p. 87.)

That the misery of others may cease to produce pain, is accounted for by the theory, but it does not seem so clear why repetition should generate a liking for things, towards which nature has given us, in the first instance, no propensity. We know, indeed, that we have a natural propensity towards pity, and towards any or every emotion, rather than be in a state so unnatural as utter indifference, monotony, and stagnation. On that principle, perhaps, we may

think the pleasure people take in tragedies, and even in executions, accounted for tolerably well. But in those cases, (certainly in the first,) the sympathies of the spectators are with the sufferers; they correspond with a natural propensity; in the case of cruelty, on the contrary, the pleasure is assumed to arise, not from sympathising with others, but from their sufferings. It is however certain, that we do in many ways see an attraction in the human mind towards emotions of a purely painful character: children love to run into danger, to inflict, and even endure slight degrees of bodily pain. I fear it is also too evident, that malignity springs up in some minds without corruption from habit. The inquiry is of no farther importance than to observe the fatal, the dreadful effect on the human character, that must result from stimulating this fiend-like propensity, by the habit of public executions, brutal sports, and disregard to the sufferings of animals.

Note F, (p. 165.)

A person living upon the income derived from his land or his capital, is not to be considered as giving no value to society in return for his support, as sometimes has been mischievously instilled into the minds of the lower orders. The one lends his land, the other his capital, to persons who, by knowledge and skill in agricultural or mercantile pursuits, cause fresh creations to be drawn out of the earth, or out of products the earth has already yielded, such

as flax, which after it has been produced, is converted into linen. On these products (or the value of them in money), the borrower is enabled to subsist, after paying a portion of them to the lender, for the use of his land or his capital; the only difference being, that two parties get the produce between them, instead of one: in the first case, it is rent, or the hire of land; in the second, interest, or the hire of money. The fertility of the land, or the service of the capital is as indispensable to production, as the skill of the manager or the personal labour of the workmen.

The mistake sometimes made on this subject (as alluded to above), consists in supposing that the last of those elements can be useful without the others, *i. e.* the labour without the capital or land. Some persons have been led to imagine, because no material can be obtained without some labour, that the value of the labour, constitutes the whole value of the material, and of every commodity into which it enters. It would seem easy for those persons to bring their theory to the test, by trying whether the owner of a wood or a quarry would give them his trees, or his marble, for the price of the labour it would cost him to cut down and carry away the trees, or raise the marble. The consequence of this error has been, to make many of the working classes fancy every class in society was useless except themselves. Let a man try to labour upon nothing, or upon some material that has no useful properties, and he will soon find that labour *alone* is useless. Thus it may be seen, that a person who has no land or capital of his own, must employ his labour on the land or the

capital of others, and be content to receive only a share of the produce in return; and he who has land or capital, but who cannot or will not work it himself, must lend it to others who will; and also be content with such a share of the produce, as the borrower agrees to give. Whoever supplies either land or capital has been as useful as the labourer, notwithstanding his having had less trouble; for the value to society of a producer does not depend on the degree of fatigue he has endured, but on the goodness or quantity of what he has supplied for its service: if he have been so fortunate as to produce what is useful to himself or others, with little trouble or difficulty, it is so much the better for him, but society has not been worse served. This is the case of persons, living independently of manual labour on the rents or interest derived from land or capital, and when those persons are fulfilling social offices that promote order, knowledge, virtue, and happiness, society is much better served, than by having all its members engaged in providing for physical wants.

Note G, (p. 169.)

Many productions, that are not objectionable when there is plenty of food, are disadvantageous when it is scarce, or, what is the same thing, dear: trifling arts and services, therefore, which society could do well without, should not (in such circumstances) be stimulated. As a means of relieving distress, they are delusive, for they only enable those who practise

them to be more successful than others in competition for the scanty provisions, but do not remedy the scarcity of the needful article: so that when the newly-employed earn money to buy more food, some other persons will have less. The manner in which such measures operate is this—the new buyers, by the increased demand they occasion, raise the price of provisions a little; all the people, therefore, who can economise in nothing but food, get so much less than they did before. If such arts and services last long enough to raise up a new population, (and every thriving trade in time has this effect,) the increase of numbers creates a still greater scarcity, the price of food rises still higher, and a greater number of persons are reduced to subsist on an insufficient quantity. Whatever the cause of the calamity, whether it arise from bad agriculture, from natural sterility, or inability to obtain foreign supplies, a country habitually scarce in food cannot maintain the same variety of arts and manufactures as an abundant one. If they have been forced into existence, whatever the appearance of external prosperity, we may be sure it is partial, and that a good deal of misery exists unseen.

Whenever food can be produced in whatever quantity it is called for, as in America, any form of industry which supports those who practise it may safely be followed; for the demand for food occasioned by the introduction of new arts would cause more land to be cultivated, and there would be an increased population all well supplied. The possibility of a production being objectionable on moral grounds, like opium or ardent spirits, need not now

be considered. But in an old country the same means of increasing the quantity of food do not exist, as the good land is usually all cultivated already. Food might be raised on a rock by great labour and by carrying expensive manures to it, but when it was raised it might be as dear as hot-house fruit. The people who live by manual labour could not earn such wages as would enable them to buy it; persons in a better condition could not afford to feed themselves and their families, without giving up many comforts, and certainly every refinement of life. By this the industrious hands who supplied such productions would lose their employment, and be thrown into great distress; hence it is expedient to remember, that when distress is occasioned by scanty food, giving some trifling employment to poor people to enable them to earn money, or giving them money as mere charity, only enables those particular persons, (as was said at the beginning of this note,) to procure the scanty food and shift the deficiency upon some others, who are unseen and unnoticed. It is not meant by the above observation always to censure this partiality, (as it might be called,) in administering charity; we may happen to be certain that the persons we favour are deserving, and we cannot be equally sure that the others are so, who by our interference are obliged to forego their former plenty; but it may happen to be just the contrary; and in either case, it is very important that generous and benevolent persons should not deceive themselves, by imagining that effective relief is given to the total amount of misery, by any methods that do not increase the available supplies of subsistence.

Note H, (p. 171.)

In his *History of the French Revolution*, Thiers gives a preliminary sketch of the condition of France previous to that great event. He says, "Everything was a subject of privilege in individuals, in classes, in towns, in provinces, and even in trades. Industry and talent were obstructed in every direction: the ecclesiastical, civil, and military dignities were exclusively restricted to some classes, and even in those classes to particular persons. Nobody could embrance any profession, except by virtue of certain titles and pecuniary conditions: the towns had their privileges for laying on, levying, and determining the amount of the taxes, and for the appointment of magistrates.

"Even voluntary appointments, by means of survivorships had been converted to hereditary properties, which left the monarch no power of selection. He had no liberty except as to pecuniary gifts; he had been even obliged to maintain a contest with the Duc de Coigny, in defence of his right to abolish a useless office. Everything was immovably fixed in the hands of some one, and everywhere the few were resisting the plundered multitude.

"The taxes pressed on a single class. The nobility and clergy held nearly two-thirds of the land; the other third, held by the people, paid the king's taxes, a great number of feudal dues to the nobility, the tithe to the clergy, and endured, besides, the

devastations of the game and the noble sportsmen. The taxes on consumption pressed of course on the greatest number, that is, on the people; the collection of them was vexatious; the nobles were in arrear with impunity; the people, on the contrary, were abused, confined, and condemned to pay in their persons if they could not with their productions; they were maintaining with their labour and defending with their blood the highest classes in society, while they could scarcely support themselves. The citizens, an industrious and enlightened class, were less wretched indeed than the rest of the people; but while enriching the kingdom by their industry, and giving it splendour by their talents, they could obtain none of the advantages to which they had a right.

"Justice, in some provinces administered by the nobles, and in the royal jurisdictions by magistrates who bought their offices, was slow, sometimes partial, and always expensive; in criminal prosecutions constantly atrocious. Personal liberty was violated by the lettres de cachet, and the freedom of the press by the censorship*."

Note I, (p. 171.)

To relate all the oppressions which the peasantry of Egypt endure would take too much space: it would be scarcely possible for them to suffer more and live. The cultivator never knows how much will be re-

* *Histoire de la Revolution Française*, par Thiers.

quired of him: his contribution is levied in kind, and he is obliged to pay all the expenses of packing and carriage. Sometimes his whole produce is forcibly taken from him, though at a fixed and fair price; but out of the amount is taken whatever the collector pleases, to make up for the deficiencies of insolvent peasants. To supply himself with the bare necessaries of life, the Fella'hh is often obliged to secrete a part of his produce*.

In his *History of Persia*, Frazer says, "The object of the king is to wring tribute in every possible way from his subjects. He fixes on a specific sum to be levied from each province, and this is exacted from the governors, who force their agents again to extort the necessary sum from the collectors whom they employ, and the business of these is to wring it in any manner they can from the people. Each of these officers raises as much as will leave something in his own hands, thus enriching himself by fraudulent means, to be again plundered whenever the king pleases; for the king, who knows pretty well what is going on, suffers all sort of peculation and extortion, till the coffers of his nobles are replenished, and then, by some false accusation, imprisonment, or torture, he forces it from them and pockets it himself.

"The condition of a province is never inquired into, till distress threatens rebellion. No public improvements are ever undertaken; and if individuals engage in any undertaking of the kind, which suc-

* LANE'S *Account of Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians.*

ceeds, it is wrested from them, or they are ruined by exactions; hence tradesmen hide their skill as much as they can.

"Commercial men must be allowed some security, otherwise the wants of men would not be supplied. Nevertheless, if known to be rich, they are put to the torture by the governors to extort money from them. The nobles appear to live in affluence, for as no one knows how soon he shall be plundered, he spends, while he has anything to spend; and all in succession are rapidly beggared. The peasants, by concealing what they have, contrive to hoard a good deal."

Sir John Malcolm, in his *History of Persia*, observes, that to escape oppression every one complains of poverty.

Note K, (p. 186.)

In the seventeenth century, the skill and industry of the Dutch, combined with some adventitious circumstances to render them the wealthiest and most prosperous nation in Europe.

The ascendancy of Holland as a commercial country began to decline from the beginning of last century; and after the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, which terminated the war in the year 1748, the attention of the government was turned towards the means of restoring the commercial prosperity of the country, or at least of arresting its further decline. The Stadtholder, William IV., with this view, ad-

dressed some questions to the merchants, respecting the state of trade, and the proper measures to be taken to restore it, if possible, to its former condition.

In answer to those questions, the merchants were led to examine and report upon the causes which had produced their prosperity, as well as those which had led to its decline: the following is their answer:—

"1st. The natural and physical causes are the advantages of the situation of the country, on the sea, and at the mouth of considerable rivers; its situation between the northern and southern parts, which, by being in a manner the centre of all Europe, made the republic become the general market, where the merchants on both sides used to bring their superfluous commodities, in order to barter and exchange the same for the other goods they wanted.

"Nor have the barrenness of the country, and the necessities of the natives, arising from that cause, less contributed to set them upon exerting all their application, industry, and utmost stretch of genius, to fetch from foreign countries what they stand in need of in their own, and to support themselves by trade.

"The abundance of fish in th neighbouring seas puts them in a condition, not only to supply their own occasions, but with the overplus to carry on a trade with foreigners, and out of the produce of the fishery to find an equivalent, for what they wanted through the sterility and narrow boundaries and extent of their own country.

"2nd. Among the moral and political causes are to be placed, the unalterable maxim and fundamental law relating to the free exercise of different religions; and always to consider this toleration and connivance as the most effectual means to draw foreigners from adjacent countries to settle and reside here, and so become instrumental to the peopling of these provinces.

"The constant policy of the republic, to make this country a perpetual safe and secure asylum for persecuted and oppressed strangers. No alliance, no treaty, no regard for, or solicitation, of any potentate whatever, has at any time been able to weaken or destroy this law, or make the state recede from protecting those who have fled to it for their own security and self-preservation.

"Throughout the whole course of all the persecutions and oppressions that have occurred in other countries, the steady adherence of the republic to this fundamental law has been the cause, that not only many people have fled hither with their whole stock in ready cash, and their most valuable effects, but have also settled and established many trades, fabrics, manufactories, arts, and sciences, in this country, notwithstanding their first materials, for the said fabrics and manufacture, were almost wholly wanting in it, and not to be procured, but at a great expense from foreign parts.

"The constitution of our form of government, and the liberty thus accruing to the citizen, are further reasons to which the growth of trade, and its establishment in the republic, may fairly be

ascribed; and all her policy and laws are put upon such an equitable footing, that neither life, estates, nor dignities, depend on the caprice or arbitrary power of any single individual, nor is there any room for any person, who by care, frugality, and diligence, has once acquired an affluent fortune or estate, to fear a deprivation of them by any act of violence, oppression, or injustice.

"The administration of justice in the country has in like manner always been clear and impartial, and without distinction of superior or inferior rank—whether the parties have been rich or poor, or were this a foreigner and that a native; and it were greatly to be wished we could, at this day, boast of such impartial quickness and despatch in all our legal processes, considering how great an influence it has on trade.

"To sum up all, among the moral and political causes of the former flourishing state of trade, may be likewise placed the wisdom and prudence of the administration; the intrepid firmness of the councils; the faithfulness with which treaties and engagements were wont to be fulfilled and ratified; and particularly the care and caution practised to preserve tranquillity and peace, and to decline, instead of entering on a scene of war, merely to gratify the ambitious views of gaining fruitless or imaginary conquests.

"By these moral and political maxims was the glory and reputation of the republic so far spread, and foreigners animated to place so great a confidence, in the steady determination of a state so wisely and prudently conducted, that a concourse of them

stocked this country with an augmentation of inhabitants and useful hands, whereby its trade and opulence were from time to time increased.

"3rd. Among the adventitious and external causes of the rise and flourishing state of our trade may be reckoned—

"That, at the time when the best and wisest maxims were adopted in the republic, as the means of making trade flourish, they were neglected in almost all other countries; and any one reading the history of those times, may easily discover that the persecutions, on account of religion, throughout Spain, Brabant, Flanders, and many other states and kingdoms, have powerfully promoted the establishment of commerce in the republic.

"To this happy result, and the settling of manufacturers in our country, the long continuance of the civil wars in France, which were afterwards carried on in Germany, England, and divers other parts, have also very much contributed.

"It must be added in the last place, that during our most burdensome and heavy wars with Spain and Portugal, (however ruinous that period was for commerce otherwise,) these powers had both neglected their navy; whilst the navy of the republic, by a conduct directly the reverse, was at the same time formidable, and in a capacity not only to protect the trade of its own subjects, but to annoy and crush those of their enemies in all quarters*."

* See article Amsterdam—M'Culloch's *Dictionary of Commerce.*

Note L, (p. 201.)

The chief principle that regulates the wages of labour, is the proportion that the number of labourers bears to the fund that is to employ them, *i. e.*, the capital. When there are more men wanting work than the capital can employ at the usual wages, the men will compete with each other, and wages *must* be reduced.

The effect of machinery is to produce a *greater* quantity of commodities with the *same* quantity of labour. This is really to increase the efficacy of capital, and that is the same thing, practically, as to increase the *quantity* of capital. In time it must also increase the absolute quantity; for when a man's capital enables him to make ten per cent. instead of eight per cent., the capital is not only more active, but it will soon accumulate to an amount absolutely greater than it was at first: this increase of the fund that pays labour, ought therefore to have the effect of employing more men than usual, and to raise wages instead of depressing them. Such is, in fact, the real tendency of machinery; though it throws men out of work at first, because the effect of it being to produce greater results with the same labour, it follows that the same results can be produced with less labour; and this is the first course that men try. But afterwards their market becomes extended, and they then take back the same number of hands that they first employed, or even more: the competition for hands is then thrown

upon the capitalist, and the tendency of it is to raise wages. A great improvement having been introduced into the mule spinning-machine, its first effect was to cause men to be dismissed; but by its great production, those who were retained were enabled to earn more than formerly, for the spinners are paid by the quantity they produce; ultimately, however, the cheapness so increased the market, that the hands that had been dismissed were again required.

When men are thrown out of employment, it may be some time before the *general increase* of capital comes to act upon their condition beneficially; and it is on such occasions that the immediate and temporary evil may be mitigated, by whatever assists the people to learn the new arts or modes of working, and to accommodate themselves to the change that has taken place. When employment entirely fails in one branch of industry, the money capital engaged in it is usually transferred to something else; and everything is useful, that enables the working classes to follow this transfer of capital, by facilitating their removing from one place to another, or diminishing the great difficulties attendant on change of employment. The great object is, if possible, to restore the just equilibrium between the demand and the supply of labour.

On occasions of distress, the wealthier classes often contribute to its relief with great liberality; but an acquaintance with the true nature of the evil, would sometimes enable them to apply their subscriptions to purposes much more efficacious, than the temporary and imperfect remedy, afforded

even by very large sums expended in the usual inartificial methods.

Note M, (p. 207.)

There are few countries in which there are not waste lands, the cultivation of which would support a greater number of people; but in old and thickly-inhabited countries, it is seldom that any lands but the worst are uncultivated, that is, such as require more labour and outlay than other lands to make them equally productive; sometimes, however, a great deal of relief is given by cultivating them. In extreme poverty, as in Ireland, when people have nothing to give but their labour, and that there is no capital to employ them, by being put on such land they may draw a subsistence out of it, and gradually improve the land. This is returning to the rudiments of society, that is, a condition prior to the formation of capital in any form, and when there are only men and land: in resorting to this method, care must be taken to establish such principles as shall ensure the progressive *formation and increase of capital,* otherwise there will be danger of perpetuating the poverty, ignorance, and precariousness of that primitive condition.

Note N, (p. 255.)

A hasty inference might be drawn from the argument in the text, that if frugality be so desirable,

it would be still better if the wealthy renounced all luxury, and that the whole industry of the nation were directed to producing abundance of mere necessaries; such, however, could only be the case in the early stages of society, or in a very small community. A large country and dense population, provided only with necessaries, is always in a low state of civilization and liable to the many evils of that imperfect condition. If the labour of the whole people be required to produce these necessaries, then there is much labour and small returns; if the labour of only a part be so required, then the rest of the people must be idlers, for, by the supposition, there is no pursuit but producing the mere necessaries of life; and if any general calamity occur, it must fall on the necessaries of life, and on all persons alike, for there is no other form of wealth or class of persons to intercept the blow. The development of the moral and intellectual nature of man is essential to the maintenance even of his physical well-being; and it requires a very high degree of intelligence, to keep a large society permanently well fed, well clothed, well lodged, in health, and in peace among themselves. This could only be the result of excellent laws, wise government, and good morals: but these are not the growth of such knowledge as serves for husbandmen and shepherds; they are the long-laboured results of such knowledge, as can be gathered only after the progress of wealth has enabled many persons to have leisure, and to devote it to the investigation of useful truth, or to the dissemination of known truth: a class which really

does this, repays society for the greater share they inherit of its wealth.

Note O, (p. 256.)

There are no means of deriving profit from accumulation, except by creating a new and greater quantity of commodities, or commodities more valuable than those already existing; and in either way there is a benefit to society, though avarice may have been the only motive that led to the accumulation. It is usually money that people actually lay up; but it should be kept steadily in mind, that the money (as already explained in p. 245) only represents the possessor's share of the commodities existing in society—it serves as an order on society for the delivery to him of that share. If then he do not spend the money, that is, present the order and demand his share, he does not and cannot consume the commodities: but he may lend the money, and then what he does is, to give over to other persons his right to consume them—the order for his share; the borrower of the money pays wages, and buys materials and implements with it, and those wages are spent in buying provisions, clothing, fuel, &c., for final consumption. These various things may be regarded as the commodities the layer up of the money *did not consume.* It does not alter the state of the case, to suppose that those particular things were very probably not the same in kind, as would have been used by the layer up of the money; for if

the work-people have called for things, different in kind from those that the frugal man saved, the latter are still unconsumed, and the same *value* remains in society, whether in one form of goods or another. But the effect to society is very different, for the frugal man, by transferring his right to consume a given quantity to working men, has enabled them not only to have the enjoyment of that consumption, but to reproduce an equal or greater value in place of what they have destroyed; on the other side, had he been a spendthrift instead of an economist, he would have destroyed the whole value in mere enjoyment, and replaced it by nothing. This is the process by which the saving of the frugal gives bread to the industrious, who replace more than they consume; while the consumption of the prodigal, who replaces nothing, destroys much more than conduces even to his own real enjoyment.

When money is lent to a landholder, he pays the interest out of his rents, and in this case, the products that pay the lender are drawn by labour out of the soil, instead of from a cotton-mill, or a foundery. Now if the landowner have borrowed the money for some purpose that returns him a profit, such as reclaiming waste land, opening a mine or quarry, or setting up a fishery, he enriches himself and society too: he is then really, in the character of a producer, as much as the master of a cotton-mill or foundery, for society is enriched by all the new products he pours into it; by the sale of them, he replaces the whole amount of the borrowed capital he expended in wages and implements; he pays the interest due to

the lender, and acquires such profits for himself as reward his exertions; and by this last amount, he is enriched individually. But if he have borrowed the money to spend at an election, or at Newmarket, he will be just so much the poorer, and so will society: he will have no *new* profits, out of which to pay the interest of his loan; it must be taken out of his former income; and the capital borrowed, instead of being restored in the form of new productions, is consumed and gone for ever. The very horse that works in reclaiming the land is the type of the productive, and the race-horse that of the unproductive consumption: each animal's services were finally and equally consumed, but the one leaves behind a field of grass, the other, nothing but the traces of his footsteps on the grass.

The force of the arguments against prodigality, depend very much on a clear apprehension of the truth in those statements, namely, that no new revenue can be drawn from anything but new productions; and that when nothing new is created, passing money from hand to hand only gives the right of consuming commodities to one person instead of another—what one person enjoys, the other foregoes.

To some persons it may appear, that the revenues derived from the public funds are an exception to this rule; but they are only a seeming one: the revenues yielded by the public funds represent produce created by the industry of the people and sold; the money, instead of being spent by them on other productions for their own enjoyment, or spent in

reproduction, is taken from them in the form of a tax, which Government receives and spends in paying the public creditors the interest due to them. Investing money in the funds, therefore, means buying with a certain sum a right to receive annually so much of the taxes. Those persons are not living at the public expense like sinecurists, which is another false notion, sometimes instilled by designing or ignorant persons into the minds of the lower orders. They who receive an income from the funds have bought it with their own capital from the public, who pay them the interest. They have really given commodities, exactly in the same manner as if they had lent money to a farmer or manufacturer; for it must not be forgotten that the *money* they actually gave, was only the type or representative of the real goods they had a right to draw from society. There is no honest way of getting rid of the burden of paying this interest, except paying back to individuals the capital they gave; but this is seldom done. What is called selling out of the funds, is only selling to somebody else our right to so much of the taxes; if nobody choose to buy it, we could not get back our capital from the public; and on the other hand, no one can buy into the funds, except some one is willing to sell out, unless in the peculiar case of Government contracting a new debt. When this occurs, Government takes the money individuals are desirous of investing at interest, and gives to them a claim on part of the proceeds of new taxes, imposed for the purpose of paying the interest of the loan. This right the persons who lend their money can

sell, when they please, to other persons, as above explained.

The great evil of the national debt arises from its enormous amount, and from its having been chiefly spent unproductively, being thus so much capital lost to society for ever. A debt raised for some purpose really beneficial to the community might be as advantageous, as a debt contracted by a prudent individual for a useful purpose; it might be a trifling inconvenience, by which a great evil had been obviated; money might be wanted for the defence of the country, the debt thereby incurred, might be a slight evil compared with falling into the hands of an enemy; or the money might be wanted for some purpose, that would open up new sources for the industry of the people, and thereby give them more wealth than it abstracted. But, generally speaking, Government spends most of the money that it raises *unproductively;* it is not implied, that it is thereby all spent *uselessly;* it is simply meant, that whether wisely or lavishly employed, much of the money borrowed by Government, is spent on services or commodities that are quickly consumed. By this process of borrowing and spending, Government gets a great deal of the capital of the country, and turns it into income, usually exhausted within the year. The right of the lenders, to draw a certain quantity of commodities out of the general stock of society, is made over to Government, who do draw and consume it; thus it is lost for ever to society. In the six years from 1809 to 1814, the Government expenditure for army, navy, and ordnance services was above three hundred

and forty-eight millions and a half of money, being rather more than fifty-eight millions annually, for those purposes alone*.

The apparent prosperity during a great part of the war has been compared to that of a spendthrift, during his career of riot and extravagance. Contractors, public servants, merchants, landowners, and manufacturers who supplied the Government demands, and the skilful artisans in several departments, constituted together a great body of prosperous classes, while the mass of the people were plunged in poverty and wretchedness:—"At the time in question, there was a superabundant supply of labourers constantly competing for employment at the large government establishments, where the weekly wages did not exceed 15*s.*, while the price of the quartern loaf was 1*s.* 10*d.*, and the other necessary outgoings of a labourer's family were nearly as high in proportion." * * *

"The situation of the community might have been likened to that of the inhabitants of a town subjected to a general conflagration, in which some became suddenly enriched by carrying off the valuables, while the mass were involved in ruin and destitution†."

The expenses of war may appear to some persons, less properly adduced as a proof of prodigality and its consequences, than as an unavoidable calamity. The recklessness with which the public money was lavished in those days is, however, notorious, and the effects of it have never yet been

* PORTER'S *Progress of the Nation.* † Ibid.

retrieved. The reader will, I trust, view in these facts the true character of that luxurious and prodigal spirit in the higher orders, which creates a powerful and personal interest in favour of profligate expenditure, whether private or national.

Note P, (p. 269.)

Sometimes the remarks in the text may apply even to men of real eminence, but whose minds have been wholly withdrawn from worldly affairs, and absorbed in abstract investigations. Nevertheless, the general effect of great science and learning is assuredly, to give constant exercise to all the faculties in every way, and consequently to improve the judgment upon whatever subject the attention may be turned to. The connexion between the sciences is so great, that one can scarcely be thoroughly mastered without the assistance of a great many more; observation is required, both extensive and accurate; imagination is called into exercise to suggest possibilities, and judgment is as frequently employed upon probabilities as upon demonstrable truths.

It is commonly thought that men of great learning make bad men of business, but perhaps the remark may be found more on men's tongues than in their knowledge of the fact. It does not appear to be the opinion in France; and in England its truth has seldom been tried, as the custom of her government has generally been, to consign men of learning to the contemplation of the skies or the earth for their

reward: and in general society they are regarded as a distinct species. It is possible, therefore, that in some instances they may have been found too ignorant of mankind.

There is, indeed, a certain passionate temper to be met with, (among the learned as among others,) which reacts very injuriously on the mental abilities. A good moral education might have corrected it in youth: but learning alone, even though considerable, does not always control its effects on the judgment; it makes what Goethe calls one-sided men; and it is, of course, upon moral questions that it leads men to error, since demonstrative truths do not admit of dispute. Such persons are often expert logicians, acute and ingenious in drawing from their premises every deduction they will admit, and they may express them with great force. Their assumptions may even be quite true as far as they go, and the result nevertheless fallacious, because of some collateral circumstances which they have either overlooked, or not been able to estimate duly; they never suspect "there may be more things in heaven and earth than their philosophy e'er dreamt of;" consequently every conclusion they come to is Q. E. D., and whoever disputes it, they treat as a blockhead. In a word, their induction is not wide enough; neither are they ever likely to rank very high as philosophers, because, though sometimes obliged, by the dissent of others, to re-examine their theories, they start on the inquiry with minds so prepossessed, they see nothing but what makes for their own conclusions.

Note Q, (p. 283.)

It is true that many people shrink from so unvarnished a statement; they restrict and qualify the doctrines according to their several tempers, bringing fewer or more persons within the pale of their injustice, and withdrawing fewer or more opinions from the jurisdiction of reason; but they never can do so in a few instances, without invalidating their principle in all. If a pure and earnest desire to seek only for truth be a sufficient excuse for any one error, it must be equally so for every other, however gross: but this does not invalidate the right of society, to punish a man for the crimes that flow from his eccentric opinions, nor even to prevent him from disseminating doctrines that lead directly to crime; the very meaning of society and of government is, that there shall be general rules, which all shall submit to whether they approve them or not; but a man is to be punished, not for his opinions, but his actions.

Madmen are allowed by everybody to be quite innocent, though their errors are the grossest of all: this is only because they are involuntary. The madman is honestly convinced of the truth of his notions; and persons not mad, may be in the same condition with regard to opinions other people condemn. Notwithstanding his personal innocence, whenever the madman's actions (the consequences of his opinions) become dangerous to society, he is justly subject to confinement and privation of property;

and in like manner, the mere fact that a sane man's opinions are sincere and just in his mind, does not abrogate the right of society to control the propagation of his errors, if they lead to direct evil; it is, however, the business of the legislature to determine such cases. In this place enough has been said to prove, that however dangerous we may think men's opinions, however certain that it is a duty to expose them, and prevent them from spreading, we have no right either to hate, or direct hatred against those who hold them by inferring bad motives of which we have no proof, or imputing guilt to what is involuntary. Since we are directed in Scripture, while we loathe and denounce the sin, to preserve our mercy for the sinner, surely also, in exposing and denouncing error, we should hold candour and justice to a well-meaning though mistaken person, to be equally sacred.

With respect to the notion that our salvation depends on our understanding, it requires but to be stated, to be rejected.

In defence of the opinion that the truths of religion ought not to be brought to the test of reason, it is sometimes very fairly argued, that a *revealed truth* may as easily appear inconsistent with reason as a *scientific truth* may appear so, to an ignorant man; that in both cases, if the knowledge of the persons were enlarged, the inconsistency would be reconciled. But in this argument it must not be overlooked, that so long as the supposed truth is inconsistent with such reason as we have, it is not applicable by us to any purpose whatever, either of

feeling or conduct: we do not know what it really means; it may become important to us in future, when our knowledge is so enlarged as to discern its consistence with reason: but that is not now; and though it be very proper at present to yield to it a reverential assent, yet it cannot affect the certainty, that all the revealed doctrines which are intended to regulate our feelings and conduct in this life, will be agreeable to reason; that being the very faculty by which we discern the good from the bad, and the true from the false.

Note R, (p. 296.)

That revelation was designed to give mankind the least assistance towards the attainment of physical knowledge, is a proposition wholly untenable; its declared purpose was to bring life and immortality to light, and teach us the way to salvation. But no doubt can be entertained of the fact, that the Creator has left the laws of nature to be discovered, and applied to the improvement of human knowledge and its purposes, solely by the use of the faculties he has given us: and a Christian has not a shadow of reason, for supposing revelation was intended to overrule that dispensation. An unbeliever might make it an argument, that in his opinion nothing could prove that a teacher was from God, except his possessing infallible knowledge on all points; but as Christians have always held that

inspiration was only for special purposes, they have no reason whatever, for expecting an inspired writer should know or think differently from his times, on science, or facts, or any point except the direct subject of his mission.

THE END.

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